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THE

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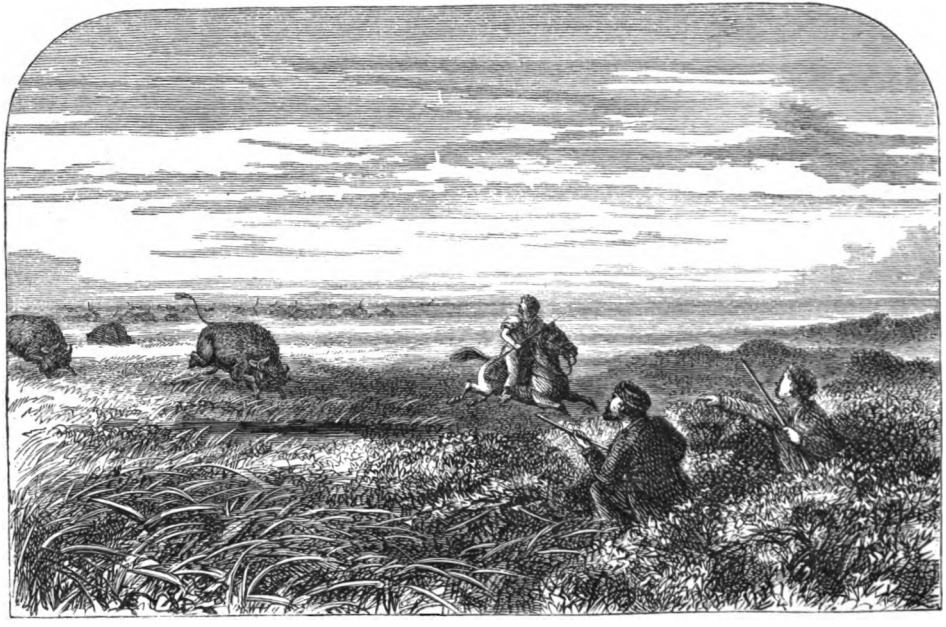

THE BUFFALO HUNTERS.

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THE

BUFFALO-HUNTERS

AND OTHER TALES

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THE BUFFALO-HUNTERS.

AFTER wandering for several months in the deserts of Sonora, I felt reluctant to return to the restraints of city life without first visiting the Presidio of Tubac. While preparing for this journey, with its perils and fatigues, I felt a sort of regret that my frequent peregrinations had destroyed all the charm of novelty in travelling in this region; there was nothing new to be learned. But I was mistaken: there were certain phases of border life, of the struggle between civilisation and barbarism, with which I was yet to become acquainted.

I journeyed to the Presidio in company with two hunters, who were going on an expedition into the prairies; we were two days on the road, and I afterwards attended them to the San Pedro, a river a short distance from Tubac, forming the boundary of the vast plains which stretched away on the other side, in endless undulations, to the remotest horizon, only limited by the far-distant Missouri. When the hunters disappeared from my view in the tall grass, I stood for a time gazing on the landscape. A small lake lay

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just in front, swarming with slimy and hideous reptiles, the sight of which attracted numbers of cranes, that flew from side to side over the muddy waters; long trains and groups of buffalos were crossing the silent prairie beyond; others, lying down on the slopes, seemed to be overlooking their boundless territories. As if the scene could not be complete without the presence of man, a party of Indian hunters were at the moment descending the San Pedro on rafts made of bundles of reeds supported by empty calabashes, while in the distance a long line of mules, laden with silver ingots, was seen slowly advancing under the conduct of their guides. The sight of this *conducta*, with only a sufficient number of men to load and unload the animals, was a proof of our being in a primitive district: in the other provinces, a regiment of soldiers would have been required to protect the precious burden; and I turned to retrace my steps, thinking over the changes to take place in this part of the country, becoming as it is the refuge of criminals from the pursuit of the law.

After riding a few hours, I perceived that the sun was near its setting, and felt surprised at not having reached the Presidio. In a short time, however, the terrible fact could no longer be doubted: deceived by the interminable succession and sameness of green slopes, I had completely wandered from the right path. I mounted the highest eminence near me, but as far as the eye could reach, there was nothing but immense savannahs without tree, house, or shelter; the river, which would have served me as a guide, was hidden by the undulating ground; and two shots which I fired produced neither echo nor reply. I was thus condemned to pass the night in these plains, over which, during the darkness, roamed objects that might well inspire

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terror. The anticipation was anything but cheering: all at once, however, I caught sight of a little gray cloud depicted on the fading purple of the horizon. It seemed to touch the earth, and expand as it rose; it was surely the smoke from a fire on the prairie. I rode hastily towards it, deliberating as to what would be the result. Was it an encampment of hunters, Indian braves, or muleteers? As the day fell, the cloud disappeared; but after a few minutes of painful uncertainty, the glare of the fire became visible through the increasing darkness, and enabled me to continue my route.

The circle of light widened as I advanced, and at last I descried the dark outline of two men seated near a wood-fire. Two enormous dogs, that rushed towards me with furious bayings, prevented my making a longer examination. Fortunately they were called off by a rude voice; yet notwithstanding this pacific demonstration, the aspect of my future entertainers was far from encouraging. The most agreeable physiognomy derives a certain air of menace from the reflection of a wood-fire, and the savage countenances of the two strangers were by no means softened by the sinister light. Their white canvas garments were literally stiffened by a thick crust of blood; however, as I approached the light, one of them bade me welcome, requesting me at the same time to dismount, as the dogs had been trained to regard as enemies only those on horseback.

I apologised for my intrusion, and inquired my way to the Presidio, which could not be far off, and to my astonishment heard that it was at least six leagues distant. Noticing my surprise, the speaker guessed that I had lost my way, and invited me to pass the night near the fire, promising me a slice of broiled buffalo for supper.

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This last offer decided me, for I had fasted since the morning, and I gladly accepted the modest hospitality, whose value was increased by the time and circumstances. After satisfying my most pressing wants, I had leisure to look about me, and became aware of the presence of a third individual, apparently asleep, on the grass where the light of the fire did not reach him; his horse, attached by a thong to a post, was grazing at his side. He, however, obeyed the summons to supper with alacrity; and as we fell into conversation, it came out that he was a fugitive from justice, charged with an assassination of which he was innocent, and converted, by the relentless pursuit of the law, from a peaceful citizen into a *salteador* or highwayman. When I spoke of the conducta that had passed in the morning he became doubly attentive, and remarked that his name would one day be known from the Atlantic to the Pacific Oceans, and then it would be the law's turn to tremble. While we were speaking, the sudden barking of the dogs interrupted our discourse; the furious animals rushed across the prairie, and in a few minutes we heard exclamations of distress.

'Holy Mary!' said the voice; 'am I to be devoured by dogs, and but just escaped from the claws of a bear?'

'Dismount! dismount! or you are a dead man!' cried one of the hunters, at the same time calling in vain to the dogs, which, without paying attention to the new-comer, leaped farther into the darkness. During this time the stranger came up, pale and trembling, and murmuring paternosters: the horse seemed even more terrified than his rider. Concluding some danger to be imminent, we all rose and seized our arms: this seemed to reanimate the last comer, for, pointing with one hand, he stammered out

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in a choked voice: 'Look yonder! Good saints, deliver us!'

One glance in the direction indicated sufficed to explain the cause of alarm: a little beyond the circle of light, a fearful form was swaying itself from left to right with a low growl, aggravated by a formidable grating of teeth. Kept at bay in the obscurity by the dogs, its dimensions appeared colossal. It was a grisly bear, the terror of the prairies.

'On horseback, every one!' said one of the hunters in a low tone. We were not long in obeying. The gigantic quadruped, intimidated by the light of the fire and our numbers, remained stationary; and while we stood undecided whether to attack or retreat, the stranger informed us that, being obliged to overtake a conducta halting for the night at a league beyond Tubac, he had persevered in spite of the darkness, and had been savagely pursued by the bear for the last two hours; and that his horse, owing to the weight of a bag of gold attached to the saddle, was nearly exhausted, when fortunately he reached our bivouac. Meantime the animal was becoming furious, and vented his impatience by tearing out large strips of turf. After a short debate, it was agreed that five men ought not to stand motionless before a beast, however fierce he might be; and we were preparing to fire, when one of the hunters proposed that as the carcass of the buffalo from which our supper had been cut had attracted the bear, it should be dragged away, and by this means rid us of the unwelcome intruder. The expedient was adopted; a lasso was passed round the dead animal, which soon disappeared in the tall grass. When the hunters rejoined us, the stranger whom I have first described, seizing a lighted brand, charged full tilt upon the

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bear, which, after a show of resistance, took to flight, first making the tour of our camp. We remained silent a few minutes, listening to the crushing of the grass, and heard a growl of satisfaction, followed by the noise of a heavy body dragged slowly away. The bear had found the carcass, and carried it off to his retreat to devour it at his ease. To our great contentment, all danger was past.

The two strangers made preparations to depart; the one who had arrived last insisted so strongly on accompanying the other, that at last, but with evident reluctance, and a singular expression of pity in his look, he consented. As they rode off into the dark and silent prairie, after bidding us farewell, one of the hunters remarked in a solemn and mysterious tone: 'The tiger and the lamb, not for long do they travel together!'

After this all was quiet, and we passed the remainder of the night sleeping with our feet towards the fire. Scarcely had the dawn appeared, and our morning meal terminated, than the hunters proceeded to observe the disposition of the herds of buffalo grazing on the plains. As if conscious that their safety lay in keeping together, not a straggler was to be seen out of the ranks, greatly to the vexation of my companions, whose only chance of a capture was in separating one or two from the main body. After watching for some time, in hopes of a favourable change, one of the hunters, after a knowing inspection of my horse, exclaimed: 'Caramba! that broad breast, slender legs, open nostrils, and long flanks, bespeak a runner above the common.'

'My horse,' I replied with the pride of an owner, 'will defy the deer for agility, the mule for fatigue'——

'And the bison for speed,' interrupted the hunter.

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'Well, senor, to come to the proof: you can render me a signal service!'

'Speak.'

'You see that troop of *cibolos* [buffalos] yonder, which seem to avoid us? Since you have such a fast horse, gallop boldly down to the timid fellows, and fire a shot or two at them, point-blank, if possible: you will wound one at least, and the whole herd will set off after you: but you will easily keep ahead of them; the most active only will continue to follow you, and with them it will be our turn.'

'Are you speaking seriously?' I asked. The hunter looked at me with astonishment. 'And if my horse were to fall?'

'But he won't.'

'But after all, if he did?'

'Then it is certain that you would have but little chance of escape. However, if you fall so gloriously, I promise to slaughter a host of cibolos in your honour.'

I thanked the hunter for his intended favour, but declined, on the ground of having seen enough of adventures, and offered to lend him my horse.

This, it appeared, was all he wanted. He immediately commenced operations by unsaddling the animal; and folding his blanket-cloak in four, attached it to the back of the horse by a long Chinese scarf. He then took off his *calzoneras* (loose trousers) and deer-skin boots, and with naked feet, and in his shirt-sleeves, was equipped for the course.

After suspending a sort of rapier, keen and pointed, to the blanket, the hunter leaped into his seat, and tested the strength of the scarf which was to serve at need as stirrups,

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and bear the whole weight of his body; then, with the lasso in his left hand, he went through a short run on the plain with the speed of an arrow. It must be confessed that in the hands of so able a rider my horse appeared altogether a different animal: I begged him, however, to be careful of the bisons' horns.

He then set off at the top of his speed for the distant herd, whose bellowings were brought down to us by the wind. He made a long circuit, the horse seeming to fly rather than to run, and neighing joyously, and disappeared behind a distant hill. Meantime, his companion had attached a red handkerchief to the top of a willow-stick, which he planted upright in the ground, on the slope where we had taken up our position. I inquired if it was a signal for his comrade.

'No,' he replied; 'buffalos are like bulls—red irritates them. If Joaquin diverts one or two, the handkerchief will certainly draw them hither, and we shall kill them close home: you must be careful to aim at their muzzle just as they are going to spring upon us!'

I did not feel altogether at my ease with this information; but as the hunter ceased to speak, we remarked a sudden movement in the herd grazing on the lower slopes of the hill behind which Joaquin had disappeared. The adventurous rider had just surmounted the height on the opposite side, when, with loud cries, he rushed down from the summit with the impetuosity of a falling rock, and disappeared in the midst of the dense forest of horns and shaggy black manes. The troop felt the shock, and broke up into groups, running in all directions. We then saw Joaquin again galloping safe and sound through the openings which he had made. Two buffalos of enormous size

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appeared to be leaders of one of the detached columns, and it was towards these that he directed his attack. Hovering on the flanks of the column, he came and went, flew hither and thither, with wonderful audacity: the two leaders, however, could not be separated from their companions. At last there was a little opening, and, rapid as lightning, Joaquin rushed at it; but whether he had presumed too much upon the agility of the horse, or whether it was a *ruse* on the part of his fierce antagonists, I saw with inexpressible anguish that the living wave, an instant disjoined, came together again, and the unhappy hunter was caught as in a closing chasm. I forgot the horse, to think of the man, and exchanged a look with my companion. His swarthy cheeks were pale as death, and with carabine in hand, he was rushing to the rescue of his comrade, when he checked himself with a cry of joy. Rudely squeezed between the horns of the two buffalos which had at last advanced beyond the column in their rear, Joaquin was standing upon his horse, whose sides were protected by the woollen covering passed round its body. While the compressed group thus advanced in our direction, the hunter drew his rapier, and placing one foot upon the woolly shoulders of the bison, plunged the murderous point in at a joint of the neck, and at the instant that the animal made a last effort not to die unavenged, leaped hurriedly to the ground. It was time, for at the same moment my poor horse was lifted on the bull's head and tumbled over. This, however, saved him, as it released him from both his enemies: he rose immediately and galloped off, followed by the two buffalos. As for Joaquin, he ran parallel with the horse, still retaining his hold of the leathern thong; and gradually approaching nearer and

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nearer, caught hold of the mane, and sprang from the ground into his seat with a hurrah of triumph.

'Our turn now!' said the hunter with whom I had remained, taking his post in sight of the two bisons, which, raging in pursuit of the horse and his rider, advanced towards us with unequal steps, while the troop, deprived of their leaders, fled to the hills. We lay flat down on the inner slope, and waited for the animals, which, somewhat disconcerted, paused for an instant, tearing up the ground with their horns. The hunter agitated the red flag, when, with ferocious joy, they again rushed forward. Joaquin had retired to one side: his part was played. It would be difficult to form an idea of the terrific aspect of the furious and wounded bison: at every movement streams of blood flowed right and left, dyeing red the black tangle of his mane; a scarlet foam covered his nostrils, whose formidable snort came every moment nearer. The other buffalo preceded him, glaring with his fierce and heavy eyes on the handkerchief, now shaken alone by the wind; for the hunter and myself waited with carabine in hand. A minute more, and we should have had to defend ourselves against two infuriated beasts; but happily the wounded bison fell heavily, and expired. 'Fire!' cried the hunter. With three balls in his head, the other buffalo stood still, and falling over, struck the ground close to the top of the slope which protected us. Joaquin came up at a short trot, fresh and smiling as a cavalier who has just been exhibiting the qualities of his horse in a riding-school. He stopped to examine the bison last fallen.

'Well,' he said, 'you have lodged two balls in his head, and that is pretty well for a beginner. As for me, in future I will hunt buffalos only on horseback.'

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'Not with mine, I hope,' I replied quickly; 'for it is a miracle that the poor animal has escaped from the horns of the others.'

The hunter was saying something in answer, when all at once he exclaimed: 'My wishes are granted: here is a horse coming for me already saddled and bridled!'

We saw, in fact, a horse thus equipped galloping towards the river, as though he was pursued by a troop of bisons, and urged to greater speed by the large wooden stirrups beating against his flanks. Judging from the sweat and foam in which he was bathed, his flight had continued some time. We recognised it as the animal belonging to the stranger who had announced the bear's visit to us the previous evening; and Joaquin, with my permission, galloping off, soon secured the fugitive with his lasso. An ugly scratch down the poor animal's side, as though made by the rider's spur in falling, and the fact that the leathern thongs which held the bag of gold to the saddle were cut, were suspicious indications as to the fate of the owner.

The two hunters shook their heads; and after conversing for a short time, Joaquin, who wished to examine a little into the mystery, offered to ride with me to Tubac. I willingly closed with the proposal; and after washing the stains from my horse's sides, we set off, accompanied by the two dogs. We had ridden for about an hour, when the two animals began to bark, and hurried to the bottom of the little valley which we were then crossing. A sad spectacle met our eyes: in the middle of a pool of blood, his face to the earth, lay the poor traveller whom we had seen depart the previous night in company with the salteador.

On investigation, however, Joaquin acquitted the latter of

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the murder. From the marks about the place, it was apparent that several persons had been engaged in the assault, and that the salteador had exerted himself to defend his companion. Doubtless the unfortunate traveller had fallen a victim to the rapacity of the same gang which, as I heard an hour later on entering Tubac, had attacked and plundered the conducta.

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THE CONTESTED MARRIAGE.

I HAD just escaped to my chambers one winter afternoon from a heavy trial 'at bar' in the King's Bench, Westminster, and was poring over a case upon which an 'opinion' was urgently solicited, when my clerk entered with a letter which he had been requested to deliver by a lady, who had called twice before during the day for the purpose of seeing me. Vexed at the interruption, I almost snatched the letter from the man's hand, hastily broke the seal, and to my great surprise found it was from my excellent old friend, Sir Jasper Thornely of Thornely Hall, Lancashire. It ran as follows:

'MY DEAR ——, The bearer of this note is a lady whom I am desirous of serving to the utmost extent of my ability. That she is really the widow she represents herself to be, and her son consequently heir to the magnificent estates now in possession of the Emsdales—you remember how they tripped up my heels at the last election for the borough of —— !—I have no moral doubt whatever; but whether her claim can be legally established is another affair. She

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will tell you the story herself. It was a heartless business; but Sir Harry, who, you have no doubt heard, broke his neck in a steeple-chase about ten months ago, was a sad wild dog. My advice is, to look out for a sharp, clever, persevering attorney, and set him upon a hunt for evidence. If he succeed, I undertake to pay him a thousand pounds over and above his legal costs. He'll nose it out for that, I should think!—Yours truly, JASPER THORNELY.

P.S.—Emsdale's son, I have just heard—confound their impudence!—intends, upon the strength of this accession of property, to stand for the county against my old friend ——, at the dissolution, which cannot now be far off. If you don't think one thousand pounds enough, I'll double it. A cruelly ill-used lady! and as to her son, he's the very image of the late Sir Harry Compton. In haste—J. T. I reopen the letter to enclose a cheque for a hundred pounds, which you will pay the attorney on account. They'll die hard, you may be sure. If it could come off next assizes, we should spoil them for the county—J. T.'

'Assizes'—'county'—'Sir Harry Compton,' I involuntarily murmured, as I finished the perusal of my old friend's incoherent epistle. 'What on earth can the eccentric old fox-hunter mean?—Shew the lady in,' I added in a louder tone to the clerk. She presently appeared, accompanied by a remarkably handsome boy about six years of age, both attired in deep mourning. The lady approached with a timid, furtive step and glance, as if she were entering the den of some grim ogre, rather than the quiet study of a civilised lawyer of mature age. I was at once struck by her singular and touching loveliness. I have never seen a woman that so completely realised the highest *Madonna* type of youthful,

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matronly beauty—its starlight radiance and mild serenity of sorrow. Her voice, too, gentle and low, had a tone of patient sadness in it strangely affecting. She was evidently a person, if not of high birth, of refined manners and cultivated mind; and I soon ceased to wonder at warm-hearted old Sir Jasper's enthusiasm in her cause. Habitually, however, on my guard against first impressions, I courteously, but coldly, invited her first to a seat, and next to a more intelligible relation of her business with me than could be gathered from the letter of which she was the bearer. She complied, and I was soon in possession of the following facts and fancies:

Violet Dalston and her sister Emily had lived for several years in close and somewhat straitened retirement with their father, Captain Dalston, at Rock Cottage, on the outskirts of a village about six miles distant from Leeds, when Captain Dalston, who was an enthusiastic angler, introduced to his home a gentleman about twenty-five years of age, of handsome exterior and gentlemanly manners, with whom congeniality of tastes and pursuits had made him acquainted. This stranger was introduced to Violet (my interesting client) and her sister, as a Mr Henry Grainger, the son of a London merchant. The object of his wanderings through the English counties was, he said, to recruit his health, which had become affected by too close application to business, and to gratify his taste for angling, sketching, and so on. He became a frequent visitor; and the result, after the lapse of about three months, was a proposal for the hand of Violet. His father allowed him, he stated, five hundred pounds per annum; but in order not to mortally offend the old gentleman, who was determined, if his son married at all, it should be either to rank or riches, it would be necessary to conceal

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the marriage till after his death. This commonplace story had been, it appeared, implicitly credited by Captain Dalston; and Violet Dalston and Henry Grainger were united in holy wedlock—not at the village church near where Captain Dalston resided, but in one of the Leeds churches. The witnesses were the bride's father and sister, and a Mr Bilston, a neighbour. This marriage had taken place rather more than seven years since, and its sole fruit was the fine-looking boy who accompanied his mother to my office. Mr Grainger, soon after the marriage, persuaded the Dalstons to leave Rock Cottage, and take up their abode in a picturesque village in Cumberland, where he had purchased a small house, with some garden and ornamental grounds attached.

Five years rolled away—not, as I could discern, *too* happily—when the very frequent absences of Violet's husband in London, as he alleged (all her letters to him were directed to the post-office, St Martin's-le-Grand—till called for), were suddenly greatly prolonged; and on his return home, after an absence of more than three months, he abruptly informed the family that the affairs of his father, who was dying, had been found to be greatly embarrassed, and that nothing was left for him and them but emigration to America, with such means as might be saved from the wreck of the elder Grainger's property. After much lamentation and opposition on the part of Emily Dalston and her father, it was finally conceded as Violet's husband wished; and the emigration was to have taken place in the following spring, Henry Grainger to follow them the instant he could wind up his father's affairs. About three months before their intended departure—this very time twelve-month, as nearly as may be—Captain Dalston was suddenly called to

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London, to close the eyes of an only sister. This sad duty fulfilled, he was about to return, when, passing towards dusk down St James's Street, he saw Henry Grainger, habited in a remarkable sporting-dress, standing with several other gentlemen at the door of one of the club-houses. Hastening across the street to accost him, he was arrested for a minute or so by a line of carriages which turned sharply out of Piccadilly; and when he *did* reach the other side, young Mr Grainger and his companions had vanished. He inquired of the porter, and was assured that no Mr Grainger, senior or junior, was known there. Persisting that he had seen him standing within the doorway, and describing his dress, the man with an insolent laugh exclaimed that the gentleman who wore that dress was the famous sporting baronet, Sir Harry Compton!

Bewildered, and suspecting he hardly knew what, Captain Dalston, in defiance of young Grainger's oft-iterated injunctions, determined to call at his father's residence, which he had always understood to be in Leadenhall Street. No such name was, however, known there; and an examination, to which he was advised, of the *Commercial Directory* failed to discover the whereabout of the pretended London merchant. Heart-sick and spirit-wearied, Captain Dalston returned home only to die. A violent cold, caught by imprudently riding, in such bitter weather as it then was, on the outside of the coach, aggravated by distress of mind, brought his already enfeebled frame to the grave in less than two months after his arrival in Cumberland. He left his daughters utterly unprovided for, except by the legal claim which the eldest possessed on a man who, he feared, would turn out to be a worthless impostor. The penalty he paid for consenting to so imprudent a marriage was indeed a

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heavy and bitter one. Months passed away, and still no tidings of Violet's husband reached the sisters' sad and solitary home. At length, stimulated by apprehensions of approaching destitution—whose foot was already on the threshold—and desirous of gratifying a whim of Emily's, Violet consented to visit the neighbourhood of Compton Castle (the seat, her sister had ascertained, of the 'celebrated sporting baronet,' as the porter called him) on their way to London, where they had relatives who, though not rich, might possibly be able to assist them in obtaining some decent means of maintenance. They alighted at the *Compton Arms*, and the first object which met the astonished gaze of the sisters, as they entered the principal sitting-room of the inn, was a full-length portrait of Violet's husband, in the exact sporting-dress described to them by their father. An ivory tablet attached to the lower part of the frame informed the gazer that the picture was a copy, by permission, of the celebrated portrait by Sir Thomas Lawrence, of Sir Harry Compton, Baronet. They were confounded, overwhelmed, bewildered. Sir Harry, they found, had been killed about eight months previously in a steeple-chase; and the castle and estates had passed, in default of direct issue, to a distant relative, Lord Emsdale. Their story was soon bruited about; and, in the opinion of many persons, was confirmed beyond reasonable question by the extraordinary likeness they saw or fancied between Violet's son and the deceased baronet. Among others, Sir Jasper Thornely was a firm believer in the identity of Henry Grainger and Sir Harry Compton; but unfortunately, beyond the assertion of the sisters that the portrait of Sir Harry was young Grainger's portrait, the real or imaginary likeness of the child to his reputed father, and some score of

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letters addressed to Violet by her husband, which Sir Jasper persisted were in Sir Harry's handwriting, though few others did (the hand, I saw at a glance, was a disguised one), not one tittle of evidence had he been able to procure for love or money. As a last resource, he had consigned the case to me, and the vulpine sagacity of a London attorney.

I suppose my countenance must be what is called a 'speaking' one, for I had made no reply in words to this statement of a case upon which I and a 'London attorney' were to ground measures for wresting a magnificent estate from the clutch of a powerful nobleman, and by 'next assizes' too—when the lady's beautiful eyes filled with tears, and turning to her child, she murmured in that gentle, agitating voice of hers: 'My poor boy!' The words I was about to utter died on my tongue, and I remained silent for several minutes. After all, thought I, this lady is evidently sincere in her expressed conviction that Sir Harry Compton was her husband. If her surmise be correct, evidence of the truth may perhaps be obtained by a keen search for it; and since Sir Jasper guarantees the expenses—— I rang the bell. 'Step over to Cursitor Street,' said I to the clerk as soon as he entered; 'and if Mr Ferret is within, ask him to step over immediately.' Ferret was just the man for such a commission. Indefatigable, resolute, sharp-witted, and of a ceaseless, remorseless activity, a secret or a fact had need be very profoundly hidden for him not to reach and fish it up. I have heard solemn doubts expressed by attorneys opposed to him as to whether he ever really and truly slept at all—that is, a genuine Christian sleep, as distinguished from a merely canine one, with one eye always half open. Mr Ferret had been for many years Mr

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Simpkins's managing clerk; but ambition, and the increasing requirements of a considerable number of young Ferrets, determined him on commencing business on his own account; and about six months previous to the period of which I am now writing, a brass door-plate in Cursitor Street, Chancery Lane, informed the public that Samuel Ferret, Esq., Attorney-at-Law, might be consulted within.

Mr Samuel Ferret was fortunately at home; and after a very brief interval, made his appearance, entering with a short professional bow to me, and a very profound one to the lady, in whom his quick gray eye seemed intuitively to espy a client. As soon as he was seated, I handed him Sir Jasper's letter. He perused it carefully three times, examined the seal attentively, and handed it back with: 'An excellent letter as far as it goes, and very much to the point. You intend, I suppose, that I should undertake this little affair?'

'Yes, if, after hearing the lady's case, you feel disposed to venture upon it.'

Mr Samuel Ferret's note-book was out in an instant; and the lady, uninterrupted by a syllable from him, retold her story.

'Good, very good, as far as it goes,' remarked undismayed Samuel Ferret when she concluded; 'only, it can scarcely be said to go very far. Moral presumption, which, in our courts, unfortunately, isn't worth a groat. Never mind. *Magna est veritas*, and so on. When, madam, did you say Sir Harry—Mr Grainger—first began to urge emigration?'

'Between two and three years ago.'

'Have the goodness, if you please, to hand me the *Baronetage*.' I did so. 'Good,' resumed Ferret, after turning over the leaves for a few seconds, 'very good, as far as

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it goes. It is now just two years and eight months since Sir Harry succeeded his uncle in the title and estates. You would no doubt soon have heard, madam, that your husband was dead. Truly the heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; and yet such conduct towards such a lady'—— Ferret intended no mere compliment; he was only giving utterance to the thoughts passing through his brain; but his client's mounting colour warned him to change the topic, which he very adroitly did. 'You intend, of course,' said he, addressing me, 'to proceed at law? No rumble-tumble through the spiritual courts?'

'Certainly, if sufficient evidence to justify such a course can be obtained.'

'Exactly: Doe, demise of Compton, *versus* Emsdale; action in ejectment, judgment of ouster.—Our friend Doe, madam—a very accommodating fellow is Doe—will, if we succeed, put you in possession as natural guardian of your son.—Well, sir,' turning to me, 'I may as well give you an acknowledgment for that cheque. I undertake the business, and shall, if possible, be off to Leeds by this evening's mail.' The acknowledgment was given, and Mr Ferret, pocketing the cheque, departed in high glee.

'The best man, madam, in all broad London,' said I in answer to Mrs Grainger's somewhat puzzled look, 'you could have retained. Fond as he seems, and in fact is, of money—what sensible person is not?—Lord Emsdale could not bribe him with his earldom, now that he is fairly engaged in your behalf, I will not say to betray you, but to abate his indefatigable activity in furtherance of your interests. Attorneys, madam, be assured, whatever nursery tales may teach, have, the very sharpest of them, their points of

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honour.' The lady and her son departed, and I turned again to the almost forgotten 'case.'

Three weeks had nearly glided by, and still no tidings of Mr Ferret. Mrs Grainger, and her sister Emily Dalston, a very charming person, had called repeatedly; but as I of course had nothing to communicate, they were still condemned to languish under the heart-sickness caused by hope deferred. At last our emissary made his wished-for appearance.

'Well, Mr Ferret,' said I, on entering my library, where I found him composedly awaiting my arrival, 'what success?'

'Why, nothing of much consequence as yet,' replied he; 'I am, you know, only, as it were, just commencing the investigation. The Leeds parson that married them is dead, and the old clerk is paralytic, and has lost his memory. If, however, they were both alive, and in sound health of mind and body, they could, I fancy, help us but little, as Bilston tells me neither the Dalstons nor Grainger had ever entered the church till the morning of the wedding; and they soon afterwards removed to Cumberland, so that it is scarcely possible either parson or clerk could prove that Violet Dalston was married to Sir Harry Compton. A very intelligent fellow is Bilston: he was present at the marriage, you remember; and a glorious witness, if he had only something of importance to depose to; powdered hair and a pigtail, double chin, and six feet in girth at least; highly respectable —capital witness, very—only, unfortunately, he can only testify that a person calling himself Grainger married Violet Dalston; not much in that!'

'So, then, your three weeks' labour has been entirely thrown away!'

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'Not so fast—not so fast—you jump too hastily at conclusions. The Cumberland fellow that sold Grainger the house—only the equity of redemption of it, by the way—there 's a large mortgage on it—can prove nothing. Nobody about there can, except the surgeon; *he* can prove Mrs Grainger's *accouchement*—that is something. I have been killing myself every evening this last week with grog and tobacco-smoke at the *Compton Arms*, in the company of the castle servants, and if the calves' heads *had* known anything essential, I fancy I should have wormed it out of them. They have, however, kindly furnished me with a scrawl of introduction to the establishment now in town, some of whom I shall have the honour to meet, in the character of an out-and-out liberal sporting gentleman, at the *Albemarle Arms* this evening. I want to get hold of his confidential valet, if he had one—those go-ahead fellows generally have—a Swiss, or some other foreign animal.'

'Is this all?'

'Why, no,' rejoined Ferret, with a sharp twinkle of his sharp gray eye, amounting almost to a wink; 'there is one circumstance which I cannot help thinking, though I scarcely know why, will put us, by the help of patience and perseverance, on the right track. In a corner of the registry of marriage there is written Z. Z. in bold letters. In no other part of the book does this occur. What may that mean?'

'Had the incumbent of the living a curate at the time?'

'No. On that point, I am unfortunately too well satisfied. Neither are there any names with such initials in any of the Leeds churchyards. Still, this Z. Z. may be of importance, if we could but discover who he is. But how?—that is the

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question. Advertise? Shew our hands to the opposite players, and find, if Z. Z. is really an entity, and likely to be of service, that when we want him in court, he is half-way to America. No, no; that would never do.'

Mr Ferret I saw was getting into a brown-study; and as I had pressing business to despatch, I got rid of him as speedily as I could, quite satisfied, spite of Z. Z., that Mrs Grainger's chance of becoming Lady Compton was about equal to mine of ascending the British throne some fine day.

Two days afterwards I received the following note:

'DEAR SIR—Z. Z. is the man! I 'm off to Shropshire. Back, if possible, the day after to-morrow. Not a word even to the ladies. Huzza! In haste, SAMUEL FERRET.'

What could this mean? Spite of Mr Ferret's injunction, I could not help informing the sisters, who called soon after I had received the note, that a discovery, esteemed of importance by our emissary, had been made; and they returned home with lightened hearts, after agreeing to repeat their visit on the day Mr Ferret had named for his return.

On reaching my chambers about four o'clock in the afternoon of that day, I found the ladies there, and in a state of great excitement. Mr Ferret, my clerk had informed them, had called twice, and seemed in the highest spirits. We had wasted but a few minutes in conjectures, when Mr Ferret, having ascended the stairs two or three at a time, burst, *sans cérémonie*, into the apartment.

'Good-day, sir.—Lady Compton, your most obedient servant.—Madam, yours!—All right! Only just in time to get the writ sealed; served it myself a quarter of an hour ago, just as his lordship was getting into his carriage. Not a day to lose; just in time. Capital! Glorious!'

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'What *do* you mean, Mr Ferret?' exclaimed Emily Dalston: her sister was too agitated to speak.

'What do I mean?—Let us all four step, sir, into your inner sanctum, and I 'll soon tell you what I mean.'

We adjourned, accordingly, to an inner and more private room. Our conference lasted about half an hour, at the end of which the ladies took their leave: Lady Compton, her beautiful features alternately irradiated and clouded by smiles and tears, murmuring in a broken, agitated voice, as she shook hands with me: 'You see, sir, he intended at last to do us justice.'

The news that an action had been brought on behalf of an infant son of the late Sir Harry Compton against the Earl of Emsdale, for the recovery of the estates in the possession of that nobleman, produced the greatest excitement in the part of the county where the property was situated. The assize town was crowded, on the day the trial was expected to come on, by the tenantry of the late baronet and their families, with whom the present landlord was by no means popular. As I passed up the principal street, towards the court-house, accompanied by my junior, I was received with loud hurrahings and waving of handkerchiefs; something after the manner, I suppose, in which chivalrous steel-clad knights, about to do battle in behalf of distressed damsels, were formerly received by the miscellaneous spectators of the lists. Numerous favours, cockades, streamers of the Compton colours, used in election contests, purple and orange, were also slily exhibited, to be more ostentatiously displayed if the Emsdale party should be beaten. On entering the court, I found it crowded, as we say, to the ceiling. Not only every seat, but every inch of standing-room that could be obtained, was occupied, and it

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was with great difficulty the ushers of the court preserved a sufficiently clear space for the ingress and egress of witnesses and counsel. Lord Emsdale, pale and anxious, spite of manifest effort to appear contemptuously indifferent, sat near the judge, who had just entered the court. The Archbishop of York, whom we had subpœnaed, why, his Grace had openly declared, he knew not, was also of course accommodated with a seat on the bench. A formidable bar, led by the celebrated Mr S——, was, I saw, arrayed against us, though what the case was they had to meet, so well had Ferret kept his secret, they knew no more than did their horse-hair wigs. Ferret had solemnly enjoined the sisters to silence; and no hint, I need scarcely say, was likely to escape *my* lips. The jury, special of course, were in attendance, and the case, 'Doe, demise of Compton, *versus* Emsdale,' having been called, they were duly sworn to try the issue. My junior, Mr Frampton, was just rising 'to state the case,' as it is technically called, when a tremendous shouting, rapidly increasing in volume and distinctness, and mingled with the sound of carriage-wheels, was heard approaching, and presently Mr Samuel Ferret appeared, followed by Lady Compton and her son, the rear of the party brought up by Sir Jasper Thornely, whose jolly fox-hunting face shone like a full-blown peony. The lady, though painfully agitated, looked charmingly; and the timid, appealing glance she unconsciously, as it were, threw round the court, would, in a doubtful case, have secured a verdict. 'Very well got up, indeed,' said Mr S——, in a voice sufficiently loud for the jury to hear—'very effectively managed, upon my word.' We were, however, in too good-humour to heed taunts; and as soon as silence was restored, Mr Frampton briefly stated the case, and I rose to address

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the jury. My speech was purposely brief, business-like, and confident. I detailed the circumstances of the marriage of Violet Dalston, then only eighteen years of age, with a Mr Grainger; the birth of a son; and subsequent disappearance of the husband; concluding by an assurance to the jury that I should prove, by incontrovertible evidence, that Grainger was no other person than the late Sir Harry Compton, baronet. This address by no means *lessened* the vague apprehensions of the other side. A counsel that, with such materials for eloquence, disdained having recourse to it, must needs have a formidable case. The smiling countenances of Mr S—— and his brethren became suddenly overcast, and the pallor and agitation of Lord Emsdale sensibly increased.

We proved our case clearly, step by step: the marriage, the accouchement, the handwriting of Grainger—Bilston proved this—to the letters addressed to his wife, were clearly established. The register of the marriage was produced by the present clerk of the Leeds church; the initials Z. Z. were pointed out; and at my suggestion the book was deposited for the purposes of the trial with the clerk of the court. Not a word of cross-examination had passed the lips of our learned friends on the other side: they allowed our evidence to pass as utterly indifferent. A change was at hand.

Our next witness was James Kirby, groom to the late baronet and to the present earl. After a few unimportant questions, I asked him if he had ever seen that gentleman before, pointing to Mr Ferret, who stood up for the more facile recognition of his friend Kirby.

'O yes, he remembered the gentleman well; and a very nice, good-natured, soft sort of a gentleman he was. He treated witness at the *Albemarle Arms*, London, to as much

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brandy and water as he liked, out of respect to his late master, whom the gentleman seemed uncommon fond of.'

'Well, and what return did you make for so much liberality?'

'Return! very little, I do assure ye. I told un how many horses Sir Harry kept, and how many races he won; but I couldn't tell un much more, pump as much as he would, because, do you see, I didn't *know* no more.'

An audible titter from the other side greeted the witness as he uttered the last sentence. Mr S——, with one of his complacent glances at the jury-box, remarking, in a sufficiently loud whisper, that he had never heard a more conclusive reason for not telling, in his life.

'Did you mention that you were present at the death of the late baronet?'

'Yes, I did. I told un that I were within about three hundred yards of late master when he had that ugly fall; and that when I got up to un, he sort of pulled me down, and whispered hoarse-like: "Send for Reverend Zachariah Zimmerman." I remembered it, it was sich an outlandish name like.'

'Oh, oh,' thought I, as Mr S—— reached across the table for the parish register, 'Z. Z. is acquiring significance, I perceive.'

'Well, and what did this gentleman say to that?'

'Say? Why, nothing particular, only seemed quite joyful 'mazed like; and when I asked un why, he said it was such a comfort to find his good friend Sir Harry had such pious thoughts in his last moments.'

The laugh, quickly suppressed, that followed these words, did not come from our learned friends on the other side.

'Sir Harry used those words?'

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'He did; but as he died two or three minutes after, it were of course no use to send for no parson whatsomever.'

'Exactly. That will do, unless the other side have any questions to ask.' No question *was* put, and the witness went down. 'Call,' said I to the crier of the court—'call the Reverend Zachariah Zimmerman.'

This was a bomb-shell. Lord Emsdale, the better to conceal his agitation, descended from the bench, and took his seat beside his counsel. The Reverend Zachariah Zimmerman, examined by Mr Frampton, deponed in substance as follows: 'He was at present rector of Dunby, Shropshire, and had been in holy orders more than twenty years. Was on a visit to the Reverend Mr Cramby at Leeds seven years ago, when one morning Mr Cramby, being much indisposed, requested him to perform the marriage ceremony for a young couple then waiting in church. He complied, and joined in wedlock Violet Dalston and Henry Grainger. The bride was the lady now pointed out to him in court; the bridegroom he had discovered, about two years ago, to be no other than the late Sir Harry Compton, baronet. The initials Z. Z. were his, and written by him. The parish clerk, a failing old man, had not officiated at the marriage; a nephew, he believed, had acted for him, but he had entered the marriage in the usual form afterwards.'

'How did you ascertain that Harry Grainger was the late Sir Harry Compton?'

'I was introduced to Sir Henry Compton in London, at the house of the Archbishop of York, by his Grace himself.'

'I remember the incident distinctly, Mr Zimmerman,' said his Grace from the bench.

'Besides which,' added the rector, 'my present living was

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presented to me, about eighteen months since, by the deceased baronet. I must further, in justice to myself, explain that I, immediately after the introduction, sought an elucidation of the mystery from Sir Harry; and he then told me that, in a freak of youthful passion, he had married Miss Dalston in the name of Grainger, fearing his uncle's displeasure, should it reach his ears; that his wife had died in her first confinement, after giving birth to a still-born child, and he now wished the matter to remain in oblivion. He also shewed me several letters, which I then believed genuine, confirming his story. I heard no more of the matter till waited upon by the attorney for the plaintiff, Mr Ferret.'

A breathless silence prevailed during the delivery of this evidence. At its conclusion, the dullest brain in court comprehended that the cause was gained; and a succession of cheers, which could not be suppressed, rang through the court, and were loudly echoed from without, Sir Jasper's voice sounding high above all the rest. Suddenly, too, as if by magic, almost everybody in court, save the jury and counsel, were decorated with orange and purple favours, and a perfect shower of them fell at the feet and about the persons of Lady Compton, her sister, who had by this time joined her, and the infant Sir Henry. As soon as the expostulations and menaces of the judge had restored silence and order, his lordship, addressing Lord Emsdale's senior counsel, said: 'Well, Brother S——, what course do you propose to adopt?'

'My lord,' replied Mr S——, after a pause, 'I and my learned friends have thought it our duty to advise Lord Emsdale that further opposition to the plaintiff's claim would prove ultimately futile; and I have therefore to

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announce, my lord and gentlemen of the jury, that we acquiesce in a verdict for the plaintiff.'

'You have counselled wisely,' replied his lordship.—'Gentlemen of the jury, you will of course return a verdict for the plaintiff.'

The jury hastily and joyfully assented: the verdict was recorded, and the court adjourned for an hour in the midst of tumultuous excitement. The result of the trial flew through the crowd outside like wild-fire; and when Lady Compton and her son, after struggling through the densely crowded court, stepped into Sir Jasper's carriage, which was in waiting at the door, the enthusiastic uproar that ensued —the hurrahing, shouting, waving of hats and handkerchiefs —deafened and bewildered one; and it was upwards of an hour ere the slow-moving chariot reached Sir Jasper's mansion, though not more than half a mile distant from the town. Mr Ferret, mounted on the box, and almost smothered in purple and orange, was a conspicuous object, and a prime favourite with the crowd. The next day, Lord Emsdale, glad, doubtless, to quit the neighbourhood as speedily as possible, left the castle, giving Lady Compton immediate possession. The joy of the tenantry was unbounded; and under the wakeful superintendence of Mr Ferret, all claims against Lord Emsdale for received rents, dilapidations, &c. were adjusted, we may be sure, *not* adversely to his client's interests; though, he frequently complained, not half so satisfactorily as if Lady Compton had not interfered with what Mr Ferret deemed misplaced generosity in the matter.

As I was obliged to proceed onwards with the circuit, I called at Compton Castle, to take leave of my interesting and fortunate client, a few days after her installation there. I

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was most gratefully received and entertained. As I shook hands at parting, her ladyship, after pressing upon me a diamond ring of great value, said, while her charming eyes filled with regretful, yet joyful tears: 'Do not forget that poor Henry intended at last to do us justice.' Prosperity, thought I, will not spoil that woman. It *has* not, as the world, were I authorised to communicate her *real* name, would readily acknowledge.

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A HONEYMOON IN 1848.

One of my friends, who had never arrived at doing anything, from having been for the last ten years in a happy state of expectation of a consulship in the East, made up his mind some time since to settle in Paris. He is yet young, and much given to day-dreams. However, though he passed for somewhat of a visionary, he was taken up seriously by a banker in that matter-of-fact region the Bourse; the worthy gentleman having ascertained that my friend, Henri Delmasures, had some hundreds of acres of land in Beauce and Normandy on which to build his castles in the air. He was a romantic visionary, but yet a landed proprietor. The banker, after a whole night spent in convincing himself that his daughter must be happy with such a man—a conclusion he arrived at by a process of adding, multiplying, and subtracting—consented to bestow her hand upon him.

Mademoiselle Matilda Hoffman was not merely a young lady wrapped up in bank-notes or cased in bullion; she had, on the contrary, in the atmosphere of the three per cents.,

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imbibed somewhat of the aërial grace of nature and poetry. The chink of the guineas had not prevented her hearing the airy voices that in every varied tone—but all soft, sweet, cheering—whisper the young heart, and fill its spring-time with delight. The dark, dull, close house in which she lived had not shut out from her all fairy visions of the

> 'Gay creatures of the element,
> That in the colours of the rainbow live,
> And play in the plighted clouds.'

And thus when my friend spoke to her a language not very usual before the 24th of February, till which epoch nothing was more rare than a union of hearts, it was little wonder that she listened to it, then learned to love it and him who spoke it.

The only unions taking place of late in France were marriages between rank and ready money—between position and pelf. Nor, incredible as it may seem, was this altogether to be laid to the charge of too cruelly prudent papas and mammas; for the young ladies themselves had more than their full share of the fault. A rage for titles, or a passion for gold, possessed every heart, and had dispelled all the delightful illusions, all the bright-glowing romance of life. It is not long since I heard a young creature, who had scarcely seen seventeen times the budding of the hawthorn, say in confidence to a friend: 'I will marry no man that is not either a nobleman or a stock-broker;' while the friend on her part reciprocated the trust reposed in her by a whispered determination 'never to marry any one but a prince or a banker.' But Matilda Hoffman troubled not herself either about the titles her Henri had not, or the money that he had: she was in love, just as the young were

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wont to be in the Golden Age. She was delighted to find that he did nothing, could no nothing, and wanted to do nothing. 'At all events,' she said to herself, 'he will not immure me in a bank; and we can go where we like, free to love and live for each other.'

It is but due to my friend Delmasures to say that he was quite ready to live for her. Matilda Hoffman had suddenly shone out upon him as the visible image of his beau-idéal of grace, goodness, and loveliness—as his taste personified. The matter was soon settled, and the marriage fixed to take place on the 24th of February.

On the evening of the 23d, after repeated calls, we at length succeeded in finding the mayor at home. Whilst the young lady was signing the necessary documents, the functionary entertained her with a lecture on politics and morality. He did not find it a very difficult matter to prove to her satisfaction that a government which thus sanctioned love by marriage was the best of all possible governments, in the best of all possible worlds, and might defy any attempt to subvert it. On leaving the mayoralty-house, however, neither M. Hoffman, the bridegroom, nor the witnesses, could find their carriages. Whilst the mayor, in all the loyalty of his tricoloured scarf, had been proving that there was nothing serious in this ebullition of boys and sucking children, the heroic and patriotic *gamins* had seized upon every hackney-coach, cab, omnibus, and other vehicle to make barricades.

That night Matilda passed alone in prayer for the dying. The next day, at eleven o'clock, Henri Delmasures presented himself at the banker's in the dress of the evening before, which it was evident he had not taken off all night, but with the addition of sabre and pistol, and no small quantity of mud.

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'But, my dear friend,' said the banker, without raising his eyes from three or four newspapers he held in his hand —'my dear friend, we cannot marry to-day.'

'Not marry to-day! Who says so?'

'Do you not know what has happened? The people have been making barricades. M. Molé succeeds M. Guizot; M. Thiers succeeds M. Molé; M. Odillon Barrot is in place of —— I forget whom—but no matter—the people will soon be in everybody's place. Just glance at these papers: really, some of the predictions are quite terrifying.'

'Not an instant is to be lost!' exclaimed Henri. 'Where is Matilda?'

He hurried to the young lady's room, and found her in her wedding-dress. 'My own Matilda, how lovely you are looking! But we must hasten to church, for in one hour it might perhaps be too late. You must not leave me longer in this revolutionary torrent that is carrying all Paris away. See, I have been fighting hard—were I not modest, I would say as hard as a *gamin*. To-morrow, the republic—but to-day, love!'

The terrified girl threw herself into the arms of her Henri. 'In mercy take me hence; far from the world, if you will; but anywhere from hence!'

'But, my love, you must change this dress. We shall have to make our way to the church over the barricades.'

Before an hour had elapsed, the curé of the parish had pronounced the nuptial benediction in a small chapel, the humble walls of which were wont to witness only the plighted vows of those who had no wealth save their strong arms and true hearts.

'Now,' said Henri to Matilda, 'let us leave your father to finish his discussion with the curé on the present state of

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affairs, and let us flee to some steam-carriage that, swifter than the wind, will take us somewhere—I care not whither, provided it be to a country where we can peacefully enjoy our honeymoon.'

'Suppose we take the railway to Rouen? Well do I remember in the woods there an old château; it was enchanting, dear Henri. I spent six weeks there last summer wandering in its groves, with no one to speak to but the trees. I am only afraid it is too near Paris: let us go to the other end of the world.'

Henri and Matilda were soon on their way to Rouen, at the full speed of a train baptised that very morning 'the Republic;' and through the window of their carriage they were witnesses of the general flight attesting 'the magnificent national co-operation that had accepted the new institutions,' and the sincerity of the adhesions to the republic, and evincing the universal confidence in the proclamations that order, liberty, and equality had been established. 'Hurrah! the dead can ride apace,' says the poet Bürger; but fallen courtiers can ride still faster. 'Only look,' said Matilda, 'at that servant in livery galloping so furiously, that I should not wonder at his outstripping us. Do you see him?'

'I see him,' answered Henri: 'it is one of the ex-ministers.'

'And that poor young woman who is dragging her feet so slowly along the rough road, and from time to time looking back with such a terrified air?'

'I see her,' replied Henri: 'she is a princess.'

Thus they beheld pass along before them all that, for nearly twenty years, had been the court and the administration. A dark page of history was unrolled upon the

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highroad—the last unfinished story of kings and queens—'Once upon a time.'

Journeying in this way, the two lovers arrived at Havre. While strolling on the sea-shore in the evening, they perceived an old gentleman hurriedly making his way towards a steamer a little apart from the rest of the shipping. Henri and Matilda paused to observe him. It was the Monarchy leaving the soil of France; and the most determined republican would scarcely have chided the respectful salutation of the young pair—the respect of pity.

But they gave up an intention they had formed of going to London. Was it from reluctance to follow in the track of the fugitive monarch, to come in contact with the hoary head from which a crown had so lately fallen? Or was it the fear that the ex-king might carry about with him, however involuntarily, the seeds of a successful revolution? Perhaps each of these reasons had some influence in changing their route. Neither would they venture to Brussels, for reports had reached them, whether true or false, of a new edition of a revolution there as well as in Holland, where the people were demanding a little, and the king granting a great deal.

However, as go somewhere they must, they went to Switzerland—the classic land of honeymoons. 'Switzerland being already a republic,' said they to themselves, 'we need not be afraid of its wanting to make itself one.' In the confidence of this hope, Henri and Matilda rented a châlet by the side of a mountain, where they might place themselves and their love under the protection of the Landamman and the old Helvetian Confederacy. But they were hardly on their way to it, after a short stroll by the side of the lake,

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when they perceived a band of armed nationalists wheeling about them. It was at Neufchâtel.

They now turned their thoughts to Germany. 'Let us go to Germany,' said they. 'There no one troubles himself about anything but waltzing or metaphysics.' They set out, but they were scarcely half-way, when they were warned: 'Do not go to Vienna; do not go to Berlin.'

As their carriage was about to cross a bridge, a female equestrian, with her hair floating over her shoulders, and her long graceful velvet drapery falling over her Arab horse, yet withal of a martial air that might have become the queen of the Amazons, galloped up so suddenly to them, and threw herself so directly in their way, that the postilion had scarcely time to pull up the leaders. 'Back, there!' she cried, as she presented in his face a little pocket-pistol.

The terrified postilion fell back upon the horse he was riding, while Henri, putting his head out of the carriage-window, recognised in the desperate Amazon the Countess de Landsfeld.

'Madame,' he said with a courteous smile, 'I beg to assure you that we are neither Prussian gensdarmes nor Bavarian municipal guards. Have the goodness, then, to reserve your powder and ball for some greater political emergency, and allow us to pursue our route.'

Lola Montès broke into a merry laugh, which made the mountains ring with its echo. They were like old courtiers, but a little more genuine—perhaps the last courtiers.

'Take good advice,' said she, 'wherever you get it. Go not to Germany: they have burned my hotel.'

So saying, the Countess de Landsfeld set off like an arrow from the bow, leaving Henri and Matilda to exchange

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glances of surprise, and to ask each other, in utter despondence, whither they were now to bend their steps—what country would receive them? 'Let us go straight forward,' at last they cried. And straight forward they went, through woods, and meadows, and ravines, till the Rhine became the splendid barrier to further progress, unless they committed themselves to its waters. They did so, and stopped not till they came to Johannisberg, where they met an old man seated in an arbour, with his bottle and glass before him.

It was M. de Metternich, who was drinking his last bottle of Johannisberg.

'Your excellency,' said Henri, respectfully saluting—the bottle—'your excellency will pardon me if, in presuming to address you, I derange the balance of power in Europe; but we are a young couple from France, who are in search of some pretty little cottage where we may give a few short weeks to each other. Your excellency—who knows all news better than any telegraph, any newspaper—will have the goodness to tell us whether there are any cottages in Germany?'

The diplomatic eye of M. de Metternich flashed somewhat angrily; but seeing nothing but artless simplicity in the faces of the young couple, he filled a fresh bumper, tossed it off, and buried his face in his hands.

'My Lord Minister,' said Matilda timidly.

'I am no longer minister,' answered he.

'My Lord Prince,' stammered Henri.

'There are no more princes.'

'Well, my Lord of Austria.'

M. de Metternich raised his head, looking sad as a German ballad.

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'Austria is no more,' said he in a gloomy whisper. 'Austrians have destroyed it in destroying me. Diplomacy is no more, for I am the last diplomatist; and I!—— O Talleyrand, thou hast done well to die! The great art of working the hinges upon which all politics turn is at an end for ever. The people break the hinges when they cannot open them, and the axe is a hammer that opens every lock. We have fallen upon evil times, when words are of no other use to statesmen than to express their thoughts, and that even when perhaps they have none to express. Pity me, then; behold me reduced to swallowing my last refuge of diplomacy—that is to say, my Johannisberg wine, that wondrous beverage with which I have mystified all Europe for more than sixty years.'

And M. de Metternich was silent, having nothing more to drink or to say.

I now lost all trace of Henri and Matilda for some time, but rested satisfied that they had at length found the promised land, when this evening I received the following letter:

'BRESCIA, *March* 19.

'MY DEAR FRIEND—We have at length arrived in Italy, after having passed through twenty countries all in revolution. Up to this moment we have not had an hour's quiet, for wherever we turned, there burst the revolutionary water-spout. Whatever shore we reached, the waves broke in upon it, and drove us before them. We have been at Brescia about half an hour, and must leave it before the hour is over. We were afraid of Vienna—afraid of Milan. "No strangers!" was the cry there; and though I knew they meant the Austrians, yet I was not certain how far they might carry their nationality. We knew that Rome

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was celebrating a constitutional carnival; that Florence's Grand Duke was proclaiming constitutions; that Naples had a king to-day, and will have to-morrow a Masaniello. We thought of Monaco, but it appears a republic is proclaiming there. The republic of San Marino next occurred to us, but there they are seriously talking of proclaiming an emperor. A prophetic hurrah has reached us from the Don Cossacks. Asia has turned her eyes westward, and drawn the sword against the Emperor of all the Cossacks. Every day we see the moon rising, it appears to us under every form and in every colour. I suppose you have it tricoloured in Paris. But it is not the honeymoon: alas! we know not where to find that! To what shore, favoured of Heaven, are we now to steer our frail bark of love, launched into the open sea in such stormy weather? We had joyfully cried out "Land!" when we reached Brescia. Here, in the fair fields of Lombardy, where Spring has already come with her hands full of opening flowers and verdant foliage, we hoped to forget the world and its revolutions; but hardly had we alighted from the diligence, than a huge creature, one of the rabble, collared me, and demanded if I were not the viceroy; for the report had been already spread that the viceroy, driven from Milan, was on his way to Brescia, which he believed to be friendly to him.

"My worthy friend," said I, "you really wrong me. I have just come from a country where the very word royal is erased from the dictionary." Apropos of the dictionary, have you still an Academy? By this time the diligence was surrounded by a crowd, not less demonstrative in its greetings than my first friend. I commenced a parley with them, interrupted from time to time by a poor nervous

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Englishwoman, white as her country's cliffs, protesting that though she did come from Munich, she was not Lola Montès. In a few minutes, however, a diversion was effected in our favour by the arrival of a second carriage. The mob rushed towards it, and seizing upon a man who alighted from it, dragged him into the next square. They say it is the viceroy: I am not sure; but one thing is certain, that the revolution is here as well as everywhere else. Danton said "that we did not carry our country about with us on the soles of our shoes;" but methinks I must carry about with me dust pregnant with revolutions.

'At length, in utter despair, I thought of Ireland. "I have heard of no revolution in Ireland."—"If not," answered Matilda, "then we must not go; a revolution there would imply quiet, for it implies change, and the usual natural state of that country is disturbance.'

'Her woman's wit at last suggested: "Why not go back whence we came?" She is quite right. Will you, then, have the goodness to call at my house and tell my English servant—but I was forgetting that the cause of liberty, equality, and fraternity would be compromised by my retaining him in my service—but tell any of my people you can find that we are on our way to Paris, and hope to spend our honeymoon at home?

'Farewell. I have but time to add, health and fraternity,

HENRI DELMASURES.'

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OLD WISDOM.

THE environs of Molsheim are amongst the fairest in the rich and fertile province of Alsace. The verdant pasturages which surround this little town are watered by the river Bruche, and scattered hamlets and highly cultivated fields diversify the scene, whilst the bold mountain-range of the Vosges lends a certain grandeur to its aspect. The landscape, alternately rural and wild, arrests our attention each moment by some fresh contrast. Beyond these meadows spangled with flowers, these golden corn-fields and blooming orchards, the mountains appear in the distance, covered with their dark pine-woods, which cast a gloomy shadow over the valley beneath; and yet this sombre background serves only as a setting to the landscape—a cheerful character predominates throughout. The hamlets are white and glistening, the little gardens carefully kept, and the roads shady and pleasant. Here and there may be seen little wayside inns, used, not so much as resting-places for the wayfarer, as points of rendezvous for the neighbouring peasantry, where the young men meet to form plans for amusement, the

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middle-aged to escape from some domestic care, and the more advanced in years to renew the remembrances of their youth.

Several guests were seated on a bench at the door of one of these rustic taverns, and their boisterous merriment proved that the glass had not circulated in vain. The entertainer, who might easily be recognised by the care he took duly to replenish the glasses of his companions, was a young man in the heyday of life, but whose furrowed countenance indicated the indulgence of violent passions. His dress marked him out as being less of a peasant than of a workman. He had just called for a bottle of cherry-brandy with which to regale his companions, when one of the party, looking up the road, exclaimed: 'Bring another glass here, my friends; here is Father Solomon!'

'The Old Anabaptist!' was re-echoed on every side.

'Oh, let us make room for him by all means,' said the giver of the treat: 'I must have a glass with Old Wisdom.'

The new-comer, whose approach had been thus hailed, was a man far advanced in life, wearing the grave and antique garb which is peculiar in those parts to the sect of Anabaptists. He walked with a firm step, which denoted neither haste nor slothfulness, leaning the while on a staff formed from a knotted vine. His countenance was venerable, and yet full of cheerfulness. As soon as he came within hearing, all the guests began to call to him to join them, and the master of the entertainment rose and advanced to meet him.

'Good-day to you, Andrew,' said the old man in a friendly tone; 'and good-day to you, Stephen, and all of you. Is it here, then, my friends, that you pray to God on the Sabbath-day?'

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'And you, Father Solomon,' inquired Stephen, 'from what church are you coming here through the meadows?'

'I am coming from the greatest of all earthly temples, my children; even from that whose incense is the perfume of the meadows, and whose music is the harmonious voice of all creation.'

'That is to say, you are coming from your fields,' replied Andrew. 'Well, sit down there now, good father, and tell us whether your wheat looks well.'

'Tell *me* first of all how you happen to be in the country now,' replied the old man as he seated himself at the place which had been left vacant for him. 'How long has Mr Ritter's mill been able to get on without you?'

'What are Ritter and his mill to me?' exclaimed Andrew, whose countenance darkened at this question. 'I care as much about them as I do about what is passing in the moon.'

'Have you quarrelled with your master, my son?' inquired the Anabaptist.

'I have no longer any master, Father Solomon,' hastily replied the young workman. 'I left the mill yesterday, and may it henceforth have nothing to grind, unless it be old Ritter himself! Never will it have crushed worse grain.'

He then began to recount to the old man the long list of grievances which had finally led to his leaving the mill, of which he had been for ten years the director, mingling his narrative with imprecations against the owner, whom he accused of the basest ingratitude.

The Old Anabaptist listened tranquilly to the whole recital, and then calmly replied: 'You have drunk the wine of anger, Andrew, and you see all your master's faults

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double. All you have now said only acquaints me with one fact—that you are out of place.'

'And do you think that I am the one most embarrassed by that?' inquired Andrew. 'Ask old Ritter what he thinks about it; see half his mills stopped, and every day that they stand still robs him of fifty crowns—that is, of fifty pieces of his flesh. The old miser will fall sick of vexation even before he is ruined. And this is what makes me so jovial to-day, Father Solomon; because what causes grief to old skin-flints, rejoices the heart of all good fellows. —Here, more glasses, my friends, and let us drink to the discomfiture of the Jew of Molsheim.'

The Anabaptist took no notice of this challenge, and asked Andrew what he thought of doing.

'I?' exclaimed the young miller. 'Why, I mean to live like a *bourgeois*. Ritter was obliged to clear off all scores, and to line my pouch well before we parted. So long as any broad pieces remain to me, I mean to have a merry time of it.'

'And you have begun to-day to put this plan in execution?' inquired the old man.

'As you may perceive,' replied Andrew, whose utterance was becoming somewhat indistinct, 'we are trying the taste of all the casks in the inn.—Hollo! mine host, hast thou nothing new to bring us! Let us have some little *liqueur* here quickly that may soften the heart of Old Wisdom.'

But the old man, as soon as he had tasted the few drops of cherry-brandy which he had allowed to be poured out for him, prepared to go on his way. Andrew, however, seemed resolved to detain him.

'Stay, good father,' he exclaimed; 'there is always both pleasure and profit in hearing you talk.'

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'Yes,' said another, 'you must sing us some of the old German hymns.'

'Or you will tell us stories out of the Bible,' added a third.

The Old Anabaptist made some attempts at resistance, but they would not listen to any excuse: first his hat was carried off, then his staff, and finally he was forced to resume his seat by the side of Andrew.

The old man shewed no symptoms of ill-humour at this species of friendly violence which was offered him. 'Everything must give way to youth,' said he cheerfully; 'but since you will keep me in spite of myself, you must take the consequence, and put up with one of my sermons.'

'Preach away—preach away, then, Father Solomon,' exclaimed the merry group with one voice; 'we are all ready to listen.'

This willing acquiescence was easily to be accounted for by the knowledge possessed by Andrew and his companions of the nature of the old man's general mode of instruction. What he called his sermons were for the most part histories or parables taken from the Sacred Writings, whence he always drew some useful lesson; and even those who made but small count of this latter part of his discourses, liked to listen to the old man's narratives, even as they would have done to some fireside legend. Father Solomon was in their eyes a sort of romancer, whose inventions amused their imagination, even if they did not enlighten their reason. Andrew filled the glasses once more, and the whole party, each resting his folded arms upon the table, bent forward to listen with the deepest attention.

The old man proceeded. 'I will not relate to you,' said he, 'this day either any legend of our country or any stories

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drawn from the Sacred Volume; either one or the other would be too grave for your present mood. I will rather treat you as children, by telling you a nursery tale as it is related on the other side of the Rhine.

'In olden times, then, when everything was different from what it is now-a-days, there lived at Mannheim a young man named Otto, who was intelligent and daring, but who never knew how to accomplish one important feat—that of bridling his own passions. When he desired a thing, nothing could prevent him from attaining it; and his passions resembled those stormy blasts which sweep across rivers, valleys, and mountains, destroying all that opposes their progress. Being wearied of the tranquil life he led at Mannheim, he took it into his head one fine day to set out on a long journey, with the hope that he might discover fortune and happiness in its course. He accordingly swung upon his shoulder a packet containing his best clothes, placed in a belt around his waist all the money he possessed, and started on his way without knowing whither he was bound.

'After journeying on for some days, he found himself at the entrance of a forest, which seemed to stretch on all sides as far as the eye could reach. He here encountered three other travellers, who seemed to have paused, like himself, to repose themselves before plunging into its depths. One was a tall, proud-looking woman, with a threatening aspect, who held in her hand a javelin; the other a young girl, who lay half asleep in a chariot drawn by four bullocks; and the third was an old woman clad in rags, and with a rugged mien. Otto saluted them, and inquired whether they were acquainted with the road through the forest; and on their replying in the affirmative, he requested permission to follow them, lest he should lose his way.

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'They all three consented, and proceeded on their way in company with the young man. The latter soon perceived that his companions were endued with powers which God has not bestowed on all His creatures, but this discovery awakened no uneasiness in his mind, and he pursued his journey, chatting the while with his three fellow-travellers.

'They had already gone on thus for some hours together, when they heard a horse's tread approaching. Otto turned round to see who it was, and recognised a bourgeois from Mannheim, whom he had hated for many a long year, and whom he looked upon as his greatest enemy. The bourgeois soon gained on the pedestrians, glanced at Otto with a scornful smile, and passed on. All the young man's *ire* was roused to the utmost.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, "I would give all I possess now, and the best part of my future inheritance to boot, if I could only revenge myself on that man for his pride and his malice."

"Do not distress yourself about that, for I can easily satisfy your wish," said the tall woman with the javelin. "Shall I transform him into a blind and infirm beggar for you? You have only to pay me the price of the transformation."

"And what would the price be?" eagerly inquired Otto.

"The right eye."

"Gladly would I give it to be really avenged."

'The young man had hardly uttered the words, when the promised change was effected in the rich bourgeois, and Otto found himself at the same moment blind of an eye. He felt at first somewhat dismayed; but he soon consoled himself for his loss by remembering that his remaining

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eye sufficed to give him the enjoyment of witnessing the sight of his enemy's misery.

'In the meanwhile they continued to walk on for several hours without seeing any end to the gloomy forest; the road was each moment becoming more hilly and rugged. Otto, who was beginning to feel somewhat fatigued, looked with an anxious eye upon the chariot in which the youngest female of the party lay half reclining at her ease. It was so ingeniously constructed, that the deepest ruts hardly gave it more than a gentle swing.

"All roads must appear short and good in this chariot," he said, approaching it with a wistful look: "I would give a great deal to have one like it."

"Is that all you want?" rejoined the second of his companions. "I can satisfy your desire in a moment." She struck with her foot the chariot which bore her. It seemed to unfold itself, and a second chariot, of exactly the same graceful and easy proportions, and drawn by two fine black bullocks, presented itself to his astonished view. When he had somewhat recovered from his amazement, he thanked the young girl, and was about to step into his newly acquired vehicle, when she motioned to him to stop.

"I have," said she, "fulfilled your desire, but I do not intend to make a worse bargain than my sister; you gave *her* one of your eyes, I require one of your arms."

'Otto was at first somewhat disconcerted by this request; but he was beginning to feel very weary; the chariot seemed waiting most invitingly to receive him; and, as I before told you, he had never been accustomed to resist the impulse of the moment. So, after some slight hesitation, he agreed to the bargain, and found himself seated in his new equipage, but at the same time deprived of his right arm. They

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now proceeded for some time on their journey without interruption. The forest seemed to stretch itself out to an interminable length. Otto soon began to feel the cravings of hunger and thirst. The old woman clad in rags quickly perceived it.

"You are becoming gloomy, my lad," said she. "When the stomach is empty, discouragement is not far distant; but I possess a sure remedy against want and despair."

"What is it, then?" inquired the young man.

"You see this flagon which I carry often to my lips?" she replied. "It contains forgetfulness of pain, joy, and the brightest visions of hope: whoever drinks of it becomes happy; and I will not drive with you a harder bargain than my sisters, for I only require in exchange one-half of your brain."

'This time the young man rejected the offer. He began to feel a sort of terror at these successive bargains. But the old hag induced him to taste the liquor contained in the flagon, and when he had once done so, it appeared to him so delicious, that his resolution gave way, and he acceded to the bargain. The promised effect was not long in making itself felt. Scarcely had he quaffed the tempting beverage, when he felt his strength revive, his heart became joyous, and full of confidence; and when he had sung all the songs he could remember, he fell quietly asleep in his chariot, perfectly indifferent as to what might become of him. When he awoke, his three companions had disappeared, and he found himself alone at the entrance of a village. He attempted to rise, but one side of his body seemed paralysed; he tried to look about him, but the one eye which now alone remained to him was dim and uncertain; he tried to speak, but his tongue faltered, and his ideas were confused. Now,

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at length, he began to comprehend how great were the sacrifices to which he had so lightly consented. His three fellow-travellers had degraded him from the level of humanity—a crippled idiot, no other resource remained for him than to beg his daily bread from door to door during the remainder of his days.'

Here the Old Anabaptist ceased. Andrew struck his fist upon the table, and burst into a noisy laugh. '*Ma foi*,' said he, 'I think your friend Otto was a fool, Father Solomon, and that he only got what he deserved. As to his three companions, they were thorough sharpers, whose names I should be glad to know, that I may take care to avoid them.'

'It is easy to tell you that,' said the old man, 'for their names are well known to all. The name of the tall woman with the javelin is Hatred; that of the young girl reclining in the chariot is Sloth; and that of the old hag with the flagon is Intemperance.'

'Well, I can quite understand that when one has to deal with such customers, one gets the worst of the bargain,' replied the young miller; 'but still I abide by my old opinion, Otto deserved no better.'

'Alas!' replied the old man gravely, 'I know some other people in the world who are no wiser than he was. What should you say, for instance, to a lad who, for the sake of ruining a master with whom he had quarrelled, exposes himself to the misfortune of being left without employment? Do you think *he* is blessed with his full sight?—or has he not rather sold one of his eyes to Hatred? Add to this, that he wishes to give himself what he calls a "merry time of it" —that is to say, to taste the pleasures of idleness, without reflecting that, once unaccustomed to labour, and enervated by idleness, he will no longer find it so easy to regain the

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use of the two stout arms which in former days constituted his wealth. Finally, to console himself under his vexations, he has already lost in the tavern one-half of his senses, and he will, before long, be deprived of the use of them altogether. If *Otto* was a fool, what opinion can *Andrew* have of one who is imitating his example?'

The group began to laugh; Andrew alone remained grave and silent. He did not seek any longer to detain the Old Anabaptist, but suffered him to depart without even saying farewell. Evidently the lesson had wounded him, as lessons which come home to our consciences generally do. But such counsels are often like those bitter draughts which at first are not only distasteful to our palate, but seem even to increase our malady; yet afterwards they prove a means of restoring us to health. Andrew reflected all night on Otto's history, and next morning he returned to Mr Ritter's mill, where he resumed the duties which he ought never to have abandoned.

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QUAKER LOVE.

BY LEITCH RITCHIE.

MANY years ago, I spent a day in the town of Elm's Cross, and although no adventure befell me there to fix the place in my memory, I see it before me at this moment as distinctly as that picture on the wall. I had an impression all that day, however erroneous, that it was Sunday. There was a Sunday silence in the streets, a Sunday gravity in the passers-by, a Sunday order and cleanliness in their habiliments. The lines of houses were ranged with the most sober decorum, and the little lawns which many of them possessed were laid out with the square and compass. The trees were not beautiful, but neat, for nature was not indulged in any of her freaks at Elm's Cross; and indeed it seemed to me that the very leaves had a peculiarly quiet green, and the flowers a reserved smell. The majority of the better class of the inhabitants of this town were Friends; and it appeared—if my imagination did not run

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away with me—that, through the influence of wealth and numbers, they had been able to impress the external characteristics of their society upon the whole place.

But no; my imagination could not have run away with me; for the moment imagination enters Elm's Cross, it is taken into custody as a vagrant, and kept in durance during its sojourn. There one loses the faculty of day-dreaming; and although I was a young fellow at the time, half-crazy with sentiment and love of adventure, even the fair Quakers, some of whom were beautiful, in spite of their bonnets, had no more effect upon me than so many marble statues. But perhaps it will give a better idea of the spirit of the place, if I say that the only one of them on whom I bestowed a second look had arrived at that time of life when the controversy begins as to whether a woman should be reckoned a young or an old maid.

This middle-aged person (not to use the offensive expression offensively) was, like all Quakers when they *are* beautiful, beautiful to excess. Retaining an exquisite complexion, even when her hair was beginning to change, she seemed a personification of the autumnal loveliness which makes one forget that of the spring and summer. Her voice, mellowed by time, was better calculated to linger in the ear than the lighter tones of youth; and it harmonised well with her soft, dove-like eyes,

'That seemed to love whate'er they looked upon.'

Yet there was no feeling in this love, such as we of the world demand in the love of her sex; the richness of her cheek was as cold as the bloom of a flower; and as, with noiseless step, and demure nun-like air, she glided past, I felt as if I had seen a portrait walk out

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of its frame, a masterly imitation of woman, but only an imitation.

This was why I turned round and looked at her again; and as I looked, a kind of pity rose in my inexperienced heart that one so fair should pass through life unstirred by its excitements, untouched by its raptures, even untroubled with its sorrows. As the novelty wore off, I hated the cold formal air of everything around; the atmosphere chilled me; the silence disturbed me; and the next morning I was glad to launch again upon the stormy world, and leave this lonely oasis to its enchanted repose.

Some time after, when giving the history of this day to a friend, who proved to be personally acquainted with the place and people, he told me that the lady on whom I had looked twice had been for many years not only the reigning beauty of Elm's Cross, but the benevolent genius of the town and neighbourhood; and he related a passage in her early life which made me qualify a little my opinion as to the passionless tranquillity of her feelings, and the uneventful blank of her history. Not that the thing can be called an adventure, that the incident has any intermixture of romance—that would be absurd. It passed over her heart like a summer cloud, which leaves the heavens as bright and serene as before; but somehow or other it infused a suspicion into my mind, that however staid the demeanour and decorous the conduct, human nature is everywhere alike—that the difference is not in the feelings, but their control.

Her father was one of the wealthiest inhabitants of the town, and Martha Hargrave was an only child, the expectant heiress of his fortune, and likewise possessed, in her own right, of £5000, safely invested. In such circumstances, it may

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be supposed that when she grew up from the child into the girl she attracted not a little the attention of blushing striplings and speculative mammas. These were, with the exception of one family, of her own Society—for Mr and Mrs Hargrave were Quakers of the old school, and confined themselves almost exclusively within the circle of Friends. The exception was formed by a widow lady and her son; the former an early intimate of Mrs Hargrave, now living on a small annuity, from which, by means of close economy, she contrived to save a little every year to pay for her boy's outfit in the world. Richard Temple was well calculated to be the object of a mother's doting affection; he was a fine, spirited, generous, handsome lad, two or three years older than Martha, of whom he was the playmate in childhood, the friend in youth, and something more after that. How it came that a penniless boy thought as he did of the Quaker heiress, may seem a mystery; but it must be recollected that the conventional distinctions of society make little impression upon children brought up together upon terms of equality. Richard looked upon Martha as his sister, till he began to feel as a personal injury the admiring looks that were thrown upon her from under the broad brims of the young Quakers; and even when the fact at length forced itself upon him that she was rich, and he poor, that she rolled in a carriage, and he walked on foot, that her parents were among the first people in the place, and his only one a solitary and almost indigent widow, the encouragement of his fond and unreflecting mother, and of his own gallant heart, triumphed over the misgivings of prudence; and the affection of the boy was suffered to ripen, unchecked, into the love of the young man.

While this process was going on with Richard, in Martha

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the wildness of childhood sobered gradually down into the demure circumspection of the Quaker girl. Her step became less buoyant, her glance less free, her speech less frank, her air more reserved; and as time wore on, Richard occasionally paused in the midst of one of his sallies, and looked at her in surprise, in a kind of awe, as if he already felt a foreshadowing of the approach of majestic womanhood. But nevertheless, when he came one day to bid her farewell before his exodus into the world, her heart was too full of the memories of her childish years to remember its new conventionalism, and she stood before him with her hands crossed upon her bosom, gazing in his face with a look of girlish fondness, that was made still softer by the tears that stood trembling in her beautiful eyes. He was to proceed to London, to be completed in his initiation into mercantile business, and might be absent for years—perhaps for ever—for his mother was to accompany him; and Martha felt the separation as her first serious distress. Richard was old enough to be aware of the nature of his own feelings; and perhaps if Martha had been in one of her grand moments, he might have dared to appeal to the growing woman in her heart. But she appeared to him on this occasion so young, so gentle, so delicate, that he would have thought it a profanation to talk to her of love. As the moment of parting arrived, he drew her towards him with both hands; his arms encircled her waist; and—how it happened I know not, for the thing was wholly out of rule—his lips were pressed to hers. The next moment he started from his bewilderment; his eyes dazzled; Martha had disappeared. He did not know, when in the morning the stage-coach was carrying him from Elm's Cross, that a young girl was sitting behind a blind

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in the highest room of that house, watching the vehicle as it rolled away, till it was prematurely lost in her blinding tears.

I am unable to trace the adventures of Richard Temple in London; but they appear to have been comparatively fortunate, since, at the end of only three years, he was a junior partner in a young but respectable firm. He had seen Miss Hargrave several times during the interval; but I need not say that their intercourse had entirely changed its character. Richard was not only interested, but likewise in some degree amused, by the transmutation of the young girl into the demure and circumspect Quaker. In essentials, however, she was not altered, but improved and exalted; and even her physical beauty acquired a new character of loveliness as the development of her moral feelings went on. But over all, there was what seemed to the young man, now that he was accustomed to the common world, an iciness of manner, which repelled his advances; and he continued to love on without daring to disclose the secret of his bosom. What matter? It was no secret to her whom it concerned; for friend Martha, with all her demureness, had a woman's heart and a woman's eyes. At the end of the three years I have mentioned, Mrs Temple died; and Richard, now alone in the world, and with tolerable prospects in business, began in due time to ask himself, with a quaking heart and a flushing brow, whether it were possible for him to obtain the Quaker girl for his bride. After much cogitation on this subject, and a thousand misgivings, his characteristic daring prevailed; and addressing to Martha an eloquent history of his love, accompanied by a frank statement of his affairs and prospects, and a solicitation for permission to woo her for his wife, he enclosed the letter, open,

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in a briefer one to her father, and despatched the fateful missive.

The reply came from Mr Hargrave. It was cold, calm, decisive. He was obliged by the good opinion entertained by his young friend of his daughter, but Martha had altogether different views. Setting aside the oppositeness of their circumstances and position in this world, which would in itself be an insurmountable objection, their religious views were not so much alike as was necessary in the case of two persons pressing forward, side by side, to the world which is to come. He hoped friend Richard would speedily forget what, to a rational-minded person, ought to be hardly a disappointment, and, when his fortune permitted it, select from his own denomination a wife of his own degree. This insolent letter, as the young man termed it, had no effect but that of rousing the fierce and headlong energy of his nature. He knew Martha too well to believe that she had any share in such a production; and he wrote at once to Mr Hargrave to say that his daughter was now old enough to decide for herself, and that he could not think of receiving at second hand a reply involving the happiness or misery of his whole life. On the following day he would present himself at his house in Elm's Cross, in the hope of hearing his fate from Martha's own lips, even if in the presence of her father and mother.

When Richard Temple passed across the Dutch-like lawn of the house, with its drilled shrubs and flowers describing mathematical figures on its level green, and ascended the steps, as white as driven snow, his hand trembled as he raised the knocker, and he felt his heart die within him. The sound he made startled him by its incongruous want of measure, and he looked round timidly, as if he had

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committed an indecorum. When the respectable middle-aged servant marshalled him up-stairs to the drawing-room, he followed the man with deference, as if he had something to say in the decision. The room was empty, and he stood for some time alone, looking round upon the walls, the furniture, the books, the flowers, and reading in them all the ruin of his hopes. There was an unostentatious richness in that room, a method in its arrangement, a calm assumption of superiority, which made him quail. The answer he had come to demand was before him. It spoke to him even in the whispered cadence of the trees beyond the open window, and the unhurried entrance of the air into the apartment, loaded with faint sweets from the garden. The loneliness in which he stood seemed strange to his excited imagination, and the silence oppressed him; and when at length the door slowly opened, unaccompanied by the sound of a foot-fall, he started in nervous tremor, as if he expected to behold the entrance of a spirit.

Martha entered the room alone, and shutting the door, glided composedly up to Richard, and offered him her hand as usual. The clasp, though gentle, was palpable; and as he saw, in the first place, that she was paler than formerly, and, in the second, that a slight colour rose into her face under his searching gaze, he was sufficiently reassured to address her.

'Martha,' he said, 'did my letter surprise you? Tell me only that it was too abrupt—that it startled and hurried you. Was it not so?'

'Nay, Richard.'

'Then you knew, even before I dared to speak, that I loved you with all the guilelessness of my infancy, all the fire of my youth, and all the deep, earnest concentrated

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passion of my manhood. Do you know of the reply my letter received?'

'Yea, Richard.'

'And you sanctioned it?'

'In meaning;' but here her voice slightly faltered: 'if the words were unkind, be thou assured that they came neither from my pen nor my heart.'

'Then I was deceived in supposing—for I did indulge the dream—that my devotion had awakened an interest in your bosom? That interest belongs to another!'

'I never had a dearer friendship than thine,' said Martha; and raising her eyes to his, she added after a pause, in the clear, distinct, silvery tone which was the character of her voice, 'and never shall!'

'Yet you reject and spurn me! This is torture! It cannot be that the difference in our worldly circumstances weighs with you: I know you better, Martha. Neither can you suppose that on my part there is the slightest tinge of mercenary feeling, for you know *me* better. Will you not give me at least hope? There are fortunes to make in the world that would satisfy even your father: we are both young; and to win you, my precious love, I would grudge neither time, nor sweat, nor blood!'

'Richard,' said the Quaker girl, growing still more pale, 'no more of this, in mercy to thyself—and me. Thou mayst agitate and unnerve, but never change my purpose.'

'What *is* your purpose?'

'To honour my father and my mother.'

'That you may enjoy long life in the land!' said Richard with a bitter smile.

'That I may honour through them my Heavenly Father, who is above all. Farewell, my early friend; return into

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the world, where thou wilt forget Martha, and may the All-wise direct thy course!' She extended her hand to him as she spoke, and he grasped it like a man in a dream. The reply he had demanded was distinct enough in her words, but a thousand times more so in her look, manner, tone. He felt that expostulation was vain, and would be unmanly; and as she walked away, with her noiseless and measured step, and her hands folded before her, he felt indignation struggling with admiring and despairing love. The figure paused for an instant at the door; but the next moment Martha disappeared without turning her head.

Richard never knew, neither can I tell, whether any one watched the stage-coach that day from the upper window. Not even a prying servant could whisper anything of Martha, or guess at the nature of the interview that had taken place. She was pale, it is true, but so had she been for some time. Her health, it appeared, was not good; her appetite was gone; her limbs feeble. But this would go off, for her manner was as usual. She was assiduous in the discharge of her duties, kind to every one, loving and reverential to her parents. Still she was not well, and her father at length grew alarmed. They took her from watering-place to watering-place; they amused her with strange sights; they tried every day to give some new direction to her thoughts. Martha was grateful. She repaid their cares with smiles, talked to them cheerfully, and did all she could to seem and to be happy. But still she was not well; and when many months had passed away, the now terrified parents, after trying everything that science and affection could suggest for the restoration of their only child, consulted once more. The nature of the step they ultimately determined upon may be gathered from the following

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communication received in reply to a letter from Mr Hargrave:

'RESPECTED FRIEND—The inquiry thou directedst has been easy. I am connected in business with one (not of our Society) to whom the young man is well known, and by whom he is much esteemed. Richard Temple is wise beyond his years. He is of quiet and retired habits in his private life, and is an energetic and persevering man of business, and will, I have no doubt, get on in the world. That this is the opinion of my friend is clear, for I know that he would willingly give him his daughter to wife, who will bring her husband a good dowry as well as a comely person. But Richard, when I saw him last, was not forward in the matter. His thoughts, even in the company of the maid, seemed preoccupied—doubtless by business.—Since writing these lines, I have been informed that he visits Elm's Cross in a few days, to arrange some matters connected with his late mother's affairs, the last remaining link of his connection with the place.—I am, respected friend, &c. EZEKIEL BROWN.'

This letter determined Mr Hargrave to recall his rejection of Richard Temple; and the effect of a conversation he had upon the subject with his daughter proved, to the unbounded joy of the parents, that as yet she had no organic disease.

For some days, Martha, though happy, was restless. It seemed as if joy had more effect than grief in unsettling the demure Quaker, for at the slightest sound from the lawn or the street the colour mounted into her face. At length an acquaintance, when calling in the evening, informed her that she had just seen Richard.

'Thou rememberest Richard, Martha?' Martha nodded.

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'He is grown so comely and so manly, thou wouldst hardly know him.'

'He will call here, peradventure?' said the mother.

'Nay. He has already taken his place in the coach for to-morrow.' Martha grew pale; and the mother hurried out of the room to seek her husband. That night, Richard received a friendly note from Mr Hargrave, begging him to call in the morning on business of importance.

When Richard found himself once more in the silent drawing-room, his manner was very different from what it had been on the last occasion. He was now calm, but gloomy, and almost stern; and he waited for the appearance of his inviter with neither hope nor fear, but with a haughty impatience. Instead of Mr Hargrave, however, it was Martha who entered the room, and he started back at the unexpected apparition in surprise and agitation. The colour that rose into her face, and made her more beautiful than ever, prevented him from seeing that she had been ill; and when she held out her hand, the slight grasp he gave it was so momentary, that he did not discover its attenuation. A painful embarrassment prevailed for some time, hardly interrupted by common questions and monosyllabic replies; till at length Richard remarked that, his place being taken, he could wait no longer, but should hope to be favoured with Mr Hargrave's commands in writing. He was about to withdraw with a ceremonious bow, when Martha stepped forward.

'Richard,' said she, 'I have no fear that my early friend will think me immodest, and therefore I will speak without concealment. Tarry yet a while, for I have that to say which, peradventure, may make thee consider thy place in the coach a light sacrifice.'

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'How!'

'Richard,' she continued, 'thou didst once woo me for thy wife, and wert rejected by my father's commands. Circumstances have brought about a change in his feelings. Must I speak it?' and a slight smile, passing away in an instant, illumined the bright flush that rose into her face. 'Wert thou to ask again, dear friend, the answer might be different!'

So long a silence ensued after this speech, that Martha at length raised her eyes suddenly, and fixed them in alarm upon Richard's face. In that face there was no joy, no thankfulness, no love; nothing but a blank and ghastly stare. He was as white as a corpse, and large beads of sweat stood upon his brow.

'Man! what meaneth this?' cried Martha, rushing towards him; but he threw out his hands to prevent her approach, while the answer came hoarse and broken from his haggard lips.

'Ruin—misery—horror!' But not for you,' added Richard, 'cold and beautiful statue! Not for you, beneath whose lovely bosom there beats not a woman's heart! Pass on your way, calm, stately, and alone; softened by no grief, touched by no love, and leave me to my despair. Martha, I am married!' And so saying, he rushed out of the room. Mrs Hargrave had just entered it unobserved, and now stood beside her daughter. Martha remained in the same attitude, leaning forward, gazing intently at the door, till the noise of the street door shutting smote upon her ear and her heart, and before her mother could interpose, she fell senseless on her face.

It is said, and said truly, that men recover more speedily than women from love disappointments. The reason is, not

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that they feel them less deeply, for the converse is the case —the strength of the male character running through all its emotions—but that the cares and struggles of life, and even the ordinary contact with society into which they are forced, serve gradually to detach their thoughts from the sorrow over which they would otherwise continue to brood. Women, at least in the class affected most by such disappointments, have more leisure than men. The world has fewer demands upon them; and they can only exhibit their mental power and loftiness of resolve by *making* wholesome occupation for their fevered minds. Of these women was Martha Hargrave. Although stunned at first by the blow, its very suddenness and severity compelled her to reflect upon her position, and summon up her energies. She did not permit her sympathies to lie buried in one absorbing subject, but cast them abroad upon the face of society; and wherever, within the reach of her influence, there was ignorance to be instructed, vice reclaimed, or misery relieved, there was Martha ready, a ministering angel at the moment of need. Under this moral discipline she recovered her bodily health. The fresh roses of youth continued to bloom in her lovely cheeks long after her hair had begun to change its hue; and so the gentle Quaker commenced her descent —gradually, gracefully, glidingly, but still demurely—into the vale of years.

The process was different with Richard Temple; but still of a kindred character. To say that he did not repent his marriage would be untrue; but still he had honour and integrity enough to cherish the wife he had married in return for her love. He devoted himself to business and to his rapidly increasing family: prospered in both; and in due time arrived at the enjoyment of at least ordinary

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happiness. But at length a period of commercial calamity came, and Richard suffered with the rest. His fixed capital was still moderately good; but he was embarrassed, almost ruined, for want of money. One day during this crisis he was in his private room in the counting-house, brooding over his difficulties, and in the least-promising mood that could be imagined for sentimental recollections, when a letter was placed before him, the first two lines of which informed him, in a brief, business-like manner, that Martha was dead. The paper dropped upon the floor; and covering his face with his hands, he abandoned himself for a long time to the deep and painful memories of his early years.

On emerging from this parenthesis in the commoner cares of life, he took up the letter to place it on the table; when, on glancing over its remaining contents, he found that poor Martha had bequeathed to him her watch and the whole of her original fortune of L.5000. This completely unmanned the man of business; and throwing himself back in his chair, he sobbed like a child. Although the money was of infinite importance to him at the time, freeing him from his present embarrassments, and paving the way for the splendid fortune he afterwards acquired, he attached a far higher value to the personal keepsake. When he had become quite an old man, it was observed that, as often as he opened the drawer in which the relic was kept, he remained plunged in a deep reverie, while gazing long and earnestly upon this first—last—only token of Quaker Love.

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THE MOTHER AND SON.

DINNER had been over about half an hour one Sunday afternoon—the only day on which for years I had been able to enjoy a dinner—and I was leisurely sipping a glass of wine, when a carriage drove rapidly up to the door, a loud *rat-tat* followed, and my friend Dr Curteis, to my great surprise, was announced.

'I have called,' said the doctor as we shook hands, 'to ask you to accompany me to Mount Place. I have just received a hurried note from Miss Armitage, stating that her mother, after a very brief illness, is rapidly sinking, and requesting my attendance, as well as that of a legal gentleman, immediately.'

'Mrs Armitage!' I exclaimed, inexpressibly shocked. 'Why, it is scarcely more than a fortnight ago that I met her at the Rochfords' in brilliant health and spirits.'

'Even so. But will you accompany me? I don't know where to find any one else for the moment, and time presses.'

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'It is an attorney, probably, rather than a barrister, that is needed; but under the circumstances, and knowing her as I do, I cannot hesitate.'

We were soon bowling along at a rapid pace, and in little more than an hour reached the dying lady's residence, situated in the county of Essex, and distant about ten miles from London. We entered together; and Dr Curteis, leaving me in the library, proceeded at once to the sick chamber. About ten minutes afterwards, the housekeeper, a tall, foreign-looking, and rather handsome woman, came into the room, and announced that the doctor wished to see me. She was deadly pale, and, I observed, trembled like an aspen. I motioned her to precede me; and she, with unsteady steps, immediately led the way. So great was her agitation, that twice, in ascending the stairs, she only saved herself from falling by grasping the banister rail. The presage I drew from the exhibition of such overpowering emotion, by a person whom I knew to have been long not only in the service, but in the confidence of Mrs Armitage, was soon confirmed by Dr Curteis, whom we met coming out of the chamber of the expiring patient.

'Step this way,' said he, addressing me, and leading to an adjoining apartment.—'We do not require your attendance, Mrs Bourdon,' said he, as soon as we reached it, to the housekeeper, who had swiftly followed us, and now stood staring with eager eyes in the doctor's face, as if life and death hung on his lips. 'Have the goodness to leave us,' he added tartly, perceiving she did not stir, but continued her fearful, scrutinising glance. She started at his altered tone, flushed crimson, then paled to a chalky whiteness, and muttering, left the apartment.

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'The danger of her mistress has bewildered her,' I remarked.

'Perhaps so,' remarked Dr Curteis. 'Be that as it may, Mrs Armitage is beyond all human help. In another hour she will be, as we say, no more.'

'I feared so. What is the nature of her disorder?'

'A rapid wasting away, as I am informed. The appearances presented are those of a person expiring of atrophy, or extreme emaciation.'

'Indeed. And so sudden too!'

'Yes. I am glad you are come, although your professional services will not, it seems, be required—a neighbouring attorney having performed the necessary duty—something, I believe, relative to the will of the dying lady. We will speak further together by-and-by. In the meantime,' continued Dr Curteis, with a perceptible tremor in his voice, 'it will do neither of us any harm to witness the closing scene of the life of Mary Rawdon, whom you and I, twenty years ago, worshipped as one of the gentlest and most beautiful of beings with which the Creator ever graced His universe. It will be a peaceful parting. Come.'

Just as, with noiseless footsteps, we entered the silent death-chamber, the last rays of the setting sun were falling upon the figure of Ellen Armitage—who knelt in speechless agony by the bedside of her expiring parent—and faintly lighting up the pale, emaciated, sunken features of the so lately brilliant, courted Mrs Armitage! But for the ineffaceable splendour of her deep-blue eyes, I should scarcely have recognised her. Standing in the shadow, as thrown by the heavy bed-drapery, we gazed and listened unperceived.

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'Ellen,' murmured the dying lady, 'come nearer to me. It is growing dark, and I cannot see you plainly. Now, then, read to me, beginning at the verse you finished with as good Dr Curteis entered. Ay,' she faintly whispered, 'it is thus, Ellen, with thy hand clasped in mine, and with the words of the holy book sounding from thy dear lips, that I would pass away!'

Ellen, interrupted only by her blinding tears, making sad stops, complied. Twilight stole on, and threw its shadow over the solemn scene, deepening its holiness of sorrow. Night came with all her train; and the silver radiance kissed into ethereal beauty the pale face of the weeping girl, still pursuing her sad and sacred task. We hesitated to disturb, by the slightest movement, the repose of a death-bed over which belief and hope, those only potent ministers, shed light and calm! At length Dr Curteis advanced gently towards the bed, and taking the daughter's hand, said in a low voice: 'Had you not better retire, my dear young lady, for a few moments?' She understood him, and rising from her knees, threw herself in an ecstasy of grief upon the corpse, from which the spirit had just passed away. Assistance was summoned, and the sobbing girl was borne from the chamber.

I descended, full of emotion, to the library, where Dr Curteis promised shortly to join me. Noiselessly entering the room, I came suddenly upon the housekeeper and a tall young man, standing with their backs towards me in the recesses of one of the windows, and partly shrouded by the heavy cloth curtains. They were evidently in earnest conference, and several words, the significance of which did not at the moment strike me, reached my ears before they perceived my approach. The instant they did so, they

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turned hastily round, and eyed me with an expression of flurried alarm, which at the time surprised me not a little. 'All is over, Mrs Bourdon,' said I, finding she did not speak; 'and your presence is probably needed by Miss Armitage.' A flash of intelligence, as I spoke, passed between the pair; but whether indicative of grief or joy, so momentary was the glance, I should have been puzzled to determine. The housekeeper immediately left the room, keeping her eyes, as she passed, fixed upon me with the same nervous apprehensive look which had before irritated Dr Curteis. The young man followed more slowly. He was a tall and rather handsome youth, apparently about one or two and twenty years of age. His hair was black as jet, and his dark eyes were of singular brilliancy; but the expression, I thought, was scarcely a refined or highly intellectual one. His resemblance to Mrs Bourdon, whose son indeed he was, was very striking. He bowed slightly, but courteously, as to an equal, as he closed the door, and I was left to undisturbed enjoyment of my own reflections, which, ill defined and indistinct as they were, were anything but pleasant company. My reverie was at length interrupted by the entrance of the doctor, with the announcement that the carriage was in waiting to re-convey us to town.

We had journeyed several miles on our return before a word was spoken by either of us. My companion was apparently even more painfully preoccupied than myself. He was, however, the first to break silence. 'The emaciated corpse we have just left little resembles the gay beautiful girl for whose smiles you and I were once disposed to shoot each other!' The doctor's voice trembled with emotion, and his face, I perceived, was pale as marble.

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'Mary Rawdon,' I remarked, 'lives again in her daughter.'

'Yes; her very image. Do you know,' continued he, speaking with rapid energy, 'I suspect Mary Rawdon—Mrs Armitage, I would say—has been foully, treacherously dealt with!'

I started with amazement; and yet the announcement but embodied and gave form and colour to my own ill-defined and shadowy suspicions.

'Good heavens! How? By whom?'

'Unless I am greatly mistaken, she has been poisoned by an adept in the use of such destructive agents.'

'Mrs Bourdon?'

'No; by her son. At least my suspicions point that way. She is probably cognisant of the crime. But in order that you should understand the grounds upon which my conjectures are principally founded, I must enter into a short explanation. Mrs Bourdon, a woman of Spanish extraction, and who formerly occupied a much higher position than she does now, has lived with Mrs Armitage from the period of her husband's death, now about sixteen years ago. Mrs Bourdon has a son, a tall, good-looking fellow enough, whom you may have seen.'

'He was with his mother in the library as I entered it after leaving you.'

'Ah! Well, hem! This boy, in his mother's opinion—but that perhaps is somewhat excusable—exhibited early indications of having been born a "genius." Mrs Armitage, who had been first struck by the beauty of the child, gradually acquired the same notion; and the result was, that he was, little by little, invested—with at least her

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tacit approval—with the privileges supposed to be the lawful inheritance of such gifted spirits; namely, the right to be as idle as he pleased—geniuses, you know, can, according to the popular notion, attain any conceivable amount of knowledge *per saltùm*, at a bound—and to exalt himself in the stilts of his own conceit above the useful and honourable pursuits suited to the station in life in which Providence had cast his lot. The fruit of such training soon shewed itself. Young Bourdon grew up a conceited and essentially ignorant puppy, capable of nothing but bad verses, and thoroughly impressed with but one important fact, which was, that he, Alfred Bourdon, was the most gifted and the most ill-used of all God's creatures. To genius, in any intelligible sense of the term, he has in truth no pretension. He is endowed, however, with a kind of reflective talent, which is often mistaken by fools for *creative* power. The morbid fancies and melancholy scorn of a Byron, for instance, such gentry reflect back from their foggy imaginations in exaggerated and distorted feebleness of whining versicles, and so on with other lights, celestial or infernal. This, however, by the way. The only rational pursuit he ever followed, and that only by fits and starts, and to gratify his faculty of "wonder," I fancy, was chemistry. A small laboratory was fitted up for him in the little summer-house you may have observed at the further corner of the lawn. This study of his, if study such desultory snatches at science may be called, led him, in his examination of vegetable bodies, to a smattering acquaintance with botany, a science of which Ellen Armitage is an enthusiastic student. They were foolishly permitted to *botanise* together, and the result was, that Alfred Bourdon, acting upon the principle that genius—whether

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sham or real—levels all merely mundane distinctions, had the impudence to aspire to the hand of Miss Armitage. His passion, sincere or simulated, has never been, I have reason to know, in the slightest degree reciprocated by its object; but so blind is vanity, that when, about six weeks ago, an *éclaircissement* took place, and the fellow's dream was somewhat rudely dissipated, the untoward rejection of his preposterous suit was, there is every reason to believe, attributed by both mother and son to the repugnance of *Mrs* Armitage alone; and to this idiotic hallucination she has, I fear, fallen a sacrifice. Judging from the emaciated appearance of the body, and other phenomena communicated to me by her ordinary medical attendant—a blundering ignoramus, who ought to have called in assistance long before—she has been poisoned with *iodine*, which, administered in certain quantities, would produce precisely the same symptoms. Happily, there is no mode of destroying human life which so surely leads to the detection of the murderer as the use of such agents; and of this truth the *post-mortem* examination of the body, which takes place to-morrow morning, will, if I am not grossly mistaken, supply another vivid illustration. . . . . Legal assistance will no doubt be necessary, and I am sure I do not err in expecting that *you* will aid me in bringing to justice the murderer of Mary Rawdon?'

A pressure of his hand was my only answer.

'I shall call for you at ten o'clock,' said he, as he put me down at my own door. I bowed, and the carriage drove off.

'Well?' said I, as Dr Curteis and Mr ——, the eminent surgeon, entered the library at Mount Place the following morning after a long absence.

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'As I anticipated,' replied the doctor with a choking voice: 'she has been poisoned!'

I started to my feet. 'And the murderer?'

'Our suspicions still point to young Bourdon; but the persons of both mother and son have been secured.'

'Apart?'

'Yes; and I have despatched a servant to request the presence of a neighbour—a county magistrate. I expect him momently.'

After a brief consultation, we all three directed our steps to the summer-house which contained young Bourdon's laboratory. In the room itself nothing of importance was discovered; but in an enclosed recess, which we broke open, we found a curiously fashioned glass bottle half full of iodine.

'This is it!' said Mr ——; 'and in a powdered state too—just ready for mixing with brandy or any other available dissolvent.' The powder had somewhat the appearance of fine black-lead. Nothing further of any consequence being observed, we returned to the house, where the magistrate had already arrived.

Alfred Bourdon was first brought in; and he having been duly cautioned that he was not obliged to answer any question, and that what he did say would be taken down, and, if necessary, used against him, I proposed the following questions:

'Have you the key of your laboratory?'

'No; the door is always open.'

'Well, then, of any door or cupboard in the room?'

At this question his face flushed purple: he stammered: 'There is no'—— and abruptly paused.

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'Do I understand you to say there is no cupboard or place of concealment in the room?'

'No: here is the key.'

'Has any one had access to the cupboard or recess of which this is the key, except yourself?'

The young man shook as if smitten with ague: his lips chattered, but no articulate sound escaped them.

'You need not answer the question,' said the magistrate, 'unless you choose to do so. I again warn you that all you say will, if necessary, be used against you.'

'No one,' he at length gasped, mastering his hesitation by a strong exertion of the will—'no one *can* have had access to the place but myself. I have never parted with the key.'

Mrs Bourdon was now called in. After interchanging a glance of intense agony, and, as it seemed to me, of affectionate intelligence, with her son, she calmly answered the questions put to her. They were unimportant, except the last, and that acted upon her like a galvanic shock. It was this: 'Did you ever struggle with your son on the landing leading to the bedroom of the deceased for the possession of this bottle?' and I held up that which we had found in the recess.

A slight scream escaped her lips; and then she stood rigid, erect, motionless, glaring alternately at me and at the fatal bottle with eyes that seemed starting from their sockets. I glanced towards the son; he was also affected in a terrible manner. His knees smote each other, and a clammy perspiration burst forth and settled upon his pallid forehead.

'Again I caution you,' iterated the magistrate, 'that you are not bound to answer any of these questions.'

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The woman's lips moved. 'No—never!' she almost inaudibly gasped, and fell senseless on the floor.

As soon as she was removed, Jane Withers was called. She deposed that three days previously, as she was, just before dusk, arranging some linen in a room a few yards distant from the bedroom of her late mistress, she was surprised at hearing a noise just outside the door, as of persons struggling and speaking in low but earnest tones. She drew aside a corner of the muslin curtain of the window which looked upon the passage or corridor, and there saw Mrs Bourdon striving to wrest something from her son's hand. She heard Mrs Bourdon say: 'You shall not do it, or you shall not have it'—she could not be sure which. A noise of some sort seemed to alarm them: they ceased struggling, and listened attentively for a few seconds: then Alfred Bourdon stole off on tip-toe, leaving the object in dispute, which witness could not see distinctly, in his mother's hand. Mrs Bourdon continued to listen, and presently Miss Armitage, opening the door of her mother's chamber, called her by name. She immediately placed what was in her hand on the marble top of a side-table standing in the corridor, and hastened to Miss Armitage. Witness left the room she had been in a few minutes afterwards, and, curious to know what Mrs Bourdon and her son had been struggling for, went to the table to look at it. It was an oddly shaped glass bottle, containing a good deal of a blackish-gray powder, which, as she held it up to the light, looked like black-lead!

'Would you be able to swear to the bottle if you saw it?'

'Certainly I should.'

'By what mark or token?'

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'The name of Valpy or Vulpy was cast into it—that is, the name was in the glass itself.'

'Is this it?'

'It is: I swear most positively.'

A letter was also read which had been taken from Bourdon's pocket. It was much creased, and was proved to be in the handwriting of Mrs Armitage. It consisted of a severe rebuke at the young man's presumption in seeking to address himself to her daughter, which insolent ingratitude, the writer said, she should never, whilst she lived, either forget or forgive. This last sentence was strongly underlined in a different ink from that used by the writer of the letter.

The surgeon deposed to the cause of death. It had been brought on by the action of iodine, which, administered in certain quantities, produced symptoms as of rapid atrophy, such as had appeared in Mrs Armitage. The glass bottle found in the recess contained iodine in a pulverised state.

I deposed that, on entering the library on the previous evening, I overheard young Mr Bourdon, addressing his mother, say: 'Now that it is done past recall, I will not shrink from any consequences, be they what they may!'

This was the substance of the evidence adduced; and the magistrate at once committed Alfred Bourdon to Chelmsford jail, to take his trial at the next assize for 'wilful murder.' A coroner's inquisition, a few days after, also returned a verdict of 'wilful murder' against him on the same evidence.

About an hour after his committal, and just previous to the arrival of the vehicle which was to convey him to the

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county prison, Alfred Bourdon requested an interview with me. I very reluctantly consented; but steeled as I was against him, I could not avoid feeling dreadfully shocked at the change which so brief an interval had wrought upon him. It had done the work of years. Despair—black, utter despair—was written in every lineament of his expressive countenance.

'I have requested to see you,' said the unhappy culprit, 'rather than Dr Curteis, because he, I know, is bitterly prejudiced against me. But *you* will not refuse, I think, the solemn request of a dying man—for a dying man I feel myself to be—however long or short the interval which stands between me and the scaffold. It is not with a childish hope that any assertion of mine can avail before the tribunal of the law against the evidence adduced this day, that I, with all the solemnity befitting a man whose days are numbered, declare to you that I am wholly innocent of the crime laid to my charge. I have no such expectation; I seek only that you, in pity of my youth and untimely fate, should convey to her whom I have madly presumed to worship, this message: "Alfred Bourdon was mad, but not blood-guilty; and of the crime laid to his charge he is innocent as an unborn child."'

'The pure and holy passion, young man,' said I, somewhat startled by his impressive manner, 'however presumptuous, as far as social considerations are concerned, it might be, by which you affect to be inspired, is utterly inconsistent with the cruel, dastardly crime of which such damning evidence has an hour since been given'——

'Say no more, sir,' interrupted Bourdon, sinking back in his seat, and burying his face in his hands: 'it were a bootless errand; she *could* not, in the face of that evidence,

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believe my unsupported assertion! It were as well perhaps she did not. And yet, sir, it is hard to be trampled into a felon's grave, loaded with the maledictions of those whom you would coin your heart to serve and bless! Ah, sir,' he continued, whilst tears of agony streamed through his firmly closed fingers, 'you cannot conceive the unutterable bitterness of the pang which rends the heart of him who feels that he is not only despised, but loathed, hated, execrated, by her whom his soul idolises! Mine was no boyish, transient passion: it has grown with my growth, and strengthened with my strength. My life has been but one long dream of her. All that my soul had drunk in of beauty in the visible earth and heavens—the light of setting suns—the radiance of the silver stars—the breath of summer flowers, together with all which we imagine of celestial purity and grace, seemed to me in her incarnated, concentred, and combined! And now lost—lost—for ever lost!' The violence of his emotions choked his utterance; and deeply and painfully affected, I hastened from his presence.

Time sped as ever onwards, surely, silently; and Justice, with her feet of lead, but hands of iron, closed gradually upon her quarry. Alfred Bourdon was arraigned before a jury of his countrymen, to answer finally to the accusation of wilful murder preferred against him.

The evidence, as given before the committing magistrate, and the coroner's inquisition, was repeated with some addition of passionate expressions used by the prisoner indicative of a desire to be avenged on the deceased. The cross-examination by the counsel for the defence was able, but failed to shake the case for the prosecution. His own admission, that no one but himself had access to the recess

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where the poison was found, told fatally against him. When called upon to address the jury, he delivered himself of a speech rather than a defence; of an oratorical effusion, instead of a vigorous, and, if possible, damaging commentary upon the evidence arrayed against him. It was a laboured, and in part eloquent, exposition of the necessary fallibility of human judgment, illustrated by numerous examples of erroneous verdicts. His peroration I jotted down at the time: 'Thus, my lord and gentlemen of the jury, is it abundantly manifest, not only by these examples, but by the testimony which every man bears in his own breast, that God could not have willed, could not have commanded, his creatures to perform a pretended duty, which he vouchsafed them no power to perform righteously. Oh, be sure that if He had intended, if He had commanded you to pronounce irreversible decrees upon your fellow-man, quenching that life which is His highest gift, He would have endowed you with gifts to perform that duty rightly! Has He done so? Ask not alone the pages dripping with innocent blood which I have quoted, but your own hearts! Are you, according to the promise of the serpent-tempter, "gods, knowing good from evil?" of such clear omniscience, that you can hurl an unprepared soul before the tribunal of its Maker, in the full assurance that you have rightly loosed the silver cord which He had measured, have justly broken the golden bowl which He had fashioned! Oh, my lord,' he concluded, his dark eyes flashing with excitement, 'it is possible that the first announcement of my innocence of this crime, to which you will give credence, may be proclaimed from the awful tribunal of Him who alone cannot err! How if He, whose eye is even now upon us, should then proclaim: "*I*, too, sat in judgment on the day when you

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presumed to doom your fellow-worm; and *I* saw that the murderer was not in the dock, but on the bench!" Oh, my lord, think well of what you do—pause ere you incur such fearful hazard; for be assured that for all these things God will also bring *you* to judgment!'

He ceased, and sank back exhausted. His fervid declamation produced a considerable impression upon the auditory; but it soon disappeared before the calm, impressive charge of the judge, who reassured the startled jury, by reminding them that their duty was to honestly execute the law, not to dispute about its justice. For himself, he said, sustained by a pure conscience, he was quite willing to incur the hazard hinted at by the prisoner. After a careful and luminous summing up, the jury, with very slight deliberation, returned a verdict of 'Guilty.'

As the word passed the lips of the foreman of the jury, a piercing shriek rang through the court. It proceeded from a tall figure in black, who, with closely-drawn veil, had sat motionless during the trial, just before the dock. It was the prisoner's mother. The next instant she rose, and throwing back her veil, wildly exclaimed: 'He is innocent —innocent, I tell ye! I alone'——

'Mother! mother! for the love of Heaven, be silent!' shouted the prisoner with frantic vehemence, and stretching himself over the front of the dock, as if to grasp and restrain her.

'Innocent, I tell you!' continued the woman. 'I—I alone am the guilty person! It was I alone that perpetrated the deed! He knew it not, suspected it not, till it was too late. Here,' she added, drawing a sheet of paper from her bosom—'here is my confession, with each circumstance detailed!'

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As she waved it over her head, it was snatched by her son, and, swift as lightning, torn to shreds. 'She is mad! Heed her not—believe her not!' He at the same time shouted at the top of his powerful voice: 'She is distracted —mad!—Now, my lord, your sentence! Come!'

The tumult and excitement in the court no language which I can employ would convey an adequate impression of. As soon as calm was partially restored, Mrs Bourdon was taken into custody: the prisoner was removed; and the court adjourned, of course without passing sentence.

It was even as his mother said. Subsequent investigation, aided by her confessions, amply proved that the fearful crime was conceived and perpetrated by her alone, in the frantic hope of securing for her idolised son the hand and fortune of Miss Armitage. She had often been present with him in his laboratory, and had thus become acquainted with the uses to which certain agents could be put. She had purloined the key of the recess; and he, unfortunately too late to prevent the perpetration of the crime, had by mere accident discovered the abstraction of the poison. His subsequent declarations had been made for the determined purpose of saving his mother's life by the sacrifice of his own!

The wretched woman was not reserved to fall before the justice of her country: the hand of God smote her ere the scaffold was prepared for her. She was smitten with frenzy, and died raving in the Metropolitan Lunatic Asylum. Alfred Bourdon, after a lengthened imprisonment, was liberated. He called on me, by appointment, a few days previous to leaving this country for ever; and I placed in his hands a small pocket-Bible, on the fly-leaf of which was written one word—'*Ellen!*' His dim eye lighted up

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with something of its old fire as he glanced at the characters; he then closed the book, placed it in his bosom, and waving me a mute farewell—I saw he durst not trust himself to speak—hastily departed. I never saw him more!

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SAYING AND DOING.

A TALE.

THE post-house at Oberhausberg had just been thrown into confusion by the arrival of a travelling-carriage on its way from Saverne to Strasbourg. Master Töpfer, the innkeeper, was running hither and thither, giving orders to his servants and postilions, whilst the carriage, which stood before the door of the court-yard, was surrounded by a group of children and idlers, who amused themselves by passing their remarks on the new-comer and his handsome equipage. Amongst the lookers-on might have been especially remarked one man with a keen quick eye and sun-burned countenance, whose Provençal accent contrasted strongly with the language of the other spectators. M. Bardanou was, in fact, a native of the south. Chance alone had led him to Oberhausberg, where he had set up, exactly opposite the inn, a hairdresser's shop, on the blue window-shutters of which were inscribed, in words which we may translate: 'Hair-cutting and shaving

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done here at *all* prices;' and 'Shaving performed after the fashion of Marseille.'

Mingling among the inquisitive group of idlers who had gathered around the door of the inn, the hairdresser bore his part in the general conversation, in a species of German which we can best describe by saying that it was the Alsatian dialect spoken with a strong Provençal accent.

'Have *you* seen the traveller, Monsieur Bardanou?' inquired an old woman, whose basket, laden with thread, needles, and laces, designated her trade as pedler.

'Of course I have, Mother Hartmann,' replied the hairdresser: 'he is a very grand-looking man, but I have some doubts as to his brains—more money than wit, I suspect.'

Now, Bardanou was critic-general of the neighbourhood, and had a fancy for saying ill-natured things, merely to shew his cleverness—for it always looks clever to find fault.

'Hold your tongue, Bardanou; he is a baron!' interrupted a merry laughing voice.

Bardanou looked around, and perceived the god-daughter of Master Töpfer, who had just made her appearance at the door of the inn. 'A baron!' he repeated: 'who told you that, Nicette?'

'The tall footman who accompanies him,' replied the young girl. 'He declared that Monsieur le Baron could not dine in the common eating-room, and that he must have everything carried up to the large balconied sitting-room.'

The gossips raised their heads: the room of which Nicette spoke was directly above them, and the window was open, but the closed curtains prevented the indulgence of idle curiosity.

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'So it is in that room you have laid the cover for him?' inquired Mother Hartmann, pointing to the balconied apartment.

'No; *I* did not lay it,' replied the young girl. 'Monsieur le Baron did not choose to have anything to say either to our porcelain-ware or our crystal glasses. He always carries about with him a service of plate; and I have just seen his valet taking it out of an ebony chest.'

A murmur of surprise and admiration arose amongst the crowd; the Provençal alone shrugged his shoulders. 'That is to say that Monsieur le Baron cannot either eat or drink like other Christians,' he ironically rejoined: 'he must have a room to himself, and a service of plate! The great King Solomon might well say: "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity."'

'Come now, Bardanou, you are again going to speak ill of your neighbour,' interrupted Nicette with a smile.

'Of my neighbour!' repeated the hairdresser. 'And do you call this baron, then, my neighbour? I know him well enough already: your great man! he is like all the nobles whom we see passing this way. Did you hear how he called to his valet, who had staid behind to speak to Master Töpfer? Depend upon it, that baron is a regular tyrant.'

'Ah! what makes you say that, Bardanou?' exclaimed Nicette. 'I hope you may be mistaken! Do you know what is bringing him into the duchy of Baden?'

'Not at all.'

'His servant told me,' replied Nicette, lowering her voice: 'he is going to be married.'

'To be married?'

'Yes; to the richest heiress in the country—a widow'——

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'With whom, doubtless, he is not acquainted.'

'I know nothing about that.'

'You may be sure he is not acquainted with her. Those kind of people marry, as one carries on commerce, by a correspondence: they only think of satisfying their avarice.'

'Hold your tongue, Bardanou,' exclaimed Nicette impatiently; 'you are always ready to think evil of others without knowing them.'

'And I generally think worse of them when I do know them,' added the southron.

'You know, however, very well, that *all* the world do not marry for the sake of enriching themselves,' replied the young girl, slightly colouring and turning away: 'there are yet some to be found who only consult their feelings.'

'Like me, for instance,' added Bardanou gaily, as he took her hand and drew her towards him.

'That has nothing to say to it,' hastily replied the young maiden.

'Pardon me, though, but it has,' exclaimed the Provençal. 'You know very well, Nicette, that *I* am no seeker after wealth, and that I do not admire you one whit the less because Master Töpfer has declared that he cannot give you any portion. But then I am an original, my dear; as your godfather says, a philosopher. I have ideas upon all these matters which are quite different from those of other people. And so surely my blood boils when I see men like your fine baron there, in whose hands fortune is only an instrument of vanity, tyranny, and avarice; and I cannot help thinking that if I were in their place, I should do more credit to the arrangements of Providence.'

'That remains to be proved, Monsieur Bardanou,' observed

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the old pedler woman; 'fortune alters characters strangely sometimes.'

'When one has no solid principles,' exclaimed the Provençal; 'when one allows one's self to be driven about like a shuttlecock by every passing wind. But I know my own mind, and how things ought to be, Mother Hartmann: I have a philosophy of my own. If I were to become rich in a single moment now, you see I should no more be changed by it than the church clock. You would always see me as just, as disinterested, and as friendly as I am now.'

Bardanou was interrupted in this imaginary catalogue of his own virtues by the appearance at the door of the hotel of the identical traveller who had given rise to the above conversation. He was a man of about forty years of age, stout, somewhat bald, and whose heavy features would have revealed his German descent, even if his strong accent had allowed of the slightest doubt remaining on the subject. But notwithstanding this, his clear blue eye burned with intelligence; and prejudice alone could have prompted the judgment which the hairdresser had so hastily passed upon him. The baron bowed in a courteous manner to the group assembled around the door, and said with a cheerful smile: 'A pretty spot, gentlemen; a pretty spot, and a fine day too!' Those whom he addressed contented themselves with returning his salutation, but made no reply. The German appeared, however, to be in nowise disconcerted by this silence. 'I hope,' he continued, still smiling, 'that the country here is fruitful, and the people happy?'

'When contentment dwells within, one can be happy anywhere,' sententiously replied Bardanou.

The baron nodded assent. 'The sentiment, sir, which you have now expressed is one of deep import,' he replied

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in a tone of deference; 'and I trust that this remark is the fruit of your own experience: he who understands so well the secret of happiness, ought himself to possess it.'

'I make the best of my position,' said Bardanou. 'I never complain, Monsieur le Baron, seeing that when one sows complaints, one seldom reaps anything but discouragements. I cut hair, shave beards, and dress fronts, and live in hopes of some lucky chance turning up.'

'And so it will,' said the baron; 'be sure it will come: fate has not imitated the example of your government; it has not abolished its lottery, and a good number is always to be hoped for.'

'*A propos* to lottery-tickets; we have two of them,' exclaimed Nicette. 'What if we were to gain the château!'

'A château!' exclaimed the stranger, becoming suddenly attentive.

'Yes; with lands and forests,' added Bardanou. 'There was a travelling clerk who came here about three months ago from Frankfort to sell the lottery-tickets, and Nicette persuaded me to take one.'

'Do you mean by any chance the domain of Rovembourg?'

'Indeed, I cannot tell, for I know nothing about it. I neither looked at the name nor the number; but doubtless I have it all written down here.'

The hairdresser took out an old pocket-book, and drew from it a prospectus and a lottery-ticket. 'That is the very name,' he said, when he had glanced at the paper. 'Domain of Rovembourg, situated about two miles from Badenweiler, at the entrance of the Black Forest. The prize was to be drawn on the 20th July.'

'And it *has* been drawn,' the stranger quietly replied.

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'And do you know which it is?'

'Yes; 66.'

Bardanou looked at his ticket, and became deadly pale. He uttered an exclamation of surprise, and repeated in an anxious tone: '66! Did you say 66?'

'Yes, certainly.'

'Then the domain of Rovembourg is mine!' cried the hairdresser, almost beside himself with delight.

'Yours!' repeated the baron with surprise.

'Look, only look! I have No. 66!'

He held up his ticket triumphantly, shewing it to all the neighbours. The stranger's countenance changed, and he approached hastily; but when he had looked at the number, he seemed again at ease, and was evidently on the point of speaking, when suddenly he stopped, as if a thought had flashed across his mind, and looking at Bardanou with that air of good-natured archness which seemed habitual to him, he bowed in token of congratulation.

The news of Bardanou's good fortune spread quickly through the village, and he was followed to his shop by a host of neighbours, who almost overwhelmed him with their congratulations. The Provençal bore this marvellous change at first pretty well; the only difference at all perceptible was, that his voice was somewhat louder than ordinary, and his affability was more dignified. The *hairdresser* was evidently becoming transformed into the *grand seigneur*. His first step in his new character was to send for the village notary, who strongly recommended him to proceed immediately to Rovembourg. Bardanou readily assented to this proposal, and requested Master Töpfer to prepare his best post-chaise and finest horses for the journey, at the same time inviting him and Nicette to accompany

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him, as well as the notary, whose services would be required on the occasion. As the carriage rolled on towards its destination, Bardanou felt more and more the certainty of his bliss, and his mind began gradually to lose its equilibrium. At the last inn at which the party stopped on the road he complained of everything: the linen was coarse, the dishes chipped, the knives and forks not fit for a gentleman to use.

At length the dark avenue of pines leading to the Château of Rovembourg appeared above the horizon, and towering amidst them arose the pointed turrets of the château itself. Nicette uttered cries of admiration at the sight of the meadows, so richly spangled with flowers; the notary seemed occupied in calculating, half aloud, the income which the woods and fields would bring in; and Master Töpfer was in ecstasies at seeing the fine horses which were galloping about in the pasturages: Bardanou alone was silent. When the turrets of Rovembourg first met his eyes, a new anxiety took possession of his mind. The acquisition of a title now seemed to him a necessary appendage to his new possessions; without it, Monsieur Bardanou would never be anything more than a wealthy plebeian. The reflections of the hairdresser had reached their culminating point when his equipage drew up at the gate of the château. Nicette proposed that they should get out; but Bardanou was resolved to enter his new dwelling in style. They must wait till the porter, who was absent, should return to open the gate for the post-chaise to enter the court-yard amidst the cracking of whips and the tingling of the bells. Bardanou had learned from the porter that the family man-of-business was not expected from Frankfort for a couple of days, but that Madame de Randoux, niece of the former proprietor, was in

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the château. This lady soon made her appearance on the steps, where she received the Provençal with all the ready grace of an accomplished woman of the world, and at the same time with all the simple friendliness of a *bourgeoise*. Madame de Randoux was a widow of about twenty-five years of age, with a pleasing rather than handsome countenance, with elegant manners, and her conversation full of interest. She was equally courteous to the companions of Bardanou as to himself, and led the whole party into a rich saloon adorned in the style of Louis XIV. Here the hairdresser found the baron, who had preceded them by some hours, and whom the widow presented to him as an old friend. Refreshments were served, and Bardanou did full justice to them, with a certain ease of manner which shewed that he felt he was only partaking of his own. Madame de Randoux afterwards proposed that they should visit the demesne, and ordered horses to her carriage, inviting Nicette and the baron to accompany them. Her offer was joyfully accepted; and Bardanou expressed himself tolerably well satisfied with the property, talked of improvements, embellishments, &c.; and ended by declaring that he wished to make Rovembourg a truly princely residence.

As they drove round the place, Madame de Randoux gaily expressed her approbation of his plans; the baron gave his assent in a more reserved manner. Bardanou began to suspect that he was jealous of him, and made up his mind that he would by no means spare so unworthy a feeling. Consequently, he continued to affect the airs of a grand seigneur, complained of the roads, the bad state of the fences, and the negligence of the foresters. Nicette continually interrupted him by pleading some excuse for those concerned; but Bardanou, who thought that a systematic

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course of complaint gave a certain air of dignity, stopped her mouth by an injunction not to interfere about matters which were above her comprehension, and the frightened girl dared not say another word upon the subject. On their return to the castle, things were still worse. The *ci-devant* hairdresser found the furniture poor, the attendance inefficient. When the hour of repose drew on, he was conducted to the finest apartment of the castle, where an alcoved bed had been prepared for him. The walls were hung with portraits representing the successive lords of the castle. Bardanou saluted them with a respect amounting almost to veneration, such as he would have felt for his ancestors. In fact he was almost beginning to feel himself the legitimate descendant of the House of Rovembourg. It was late in the night before he fell asleep; and then in dreams he saw himself at the court of the Grand Duke of Baden, his breast covered with crosses and ribbons. When he awoke, the day was already far advanced. He was about to rise in haste, when he suddenly remembered that it was not suitable for a man of his quality to dress himself without assistance. He rung for the valet-de-chambre, who immediately appeared, and began to perform all the duties of the toilet, according to the established rules of etiquette. Bardanou, who was not willing to appear ignorant of the habits of a seigneur, bore the whole operation patiently; only, when it came to the hairdressing part of the arrangement, the remembrance of his former trade overcame his sense of dignity, and snatching the comb out of the hands of his German valet, he gave him a practical lesson on the *coiffure* of a gentleman. At length, his toilet being completed, he went down to the garden, where he perceived Madame de Randoux, who was returning from a morning walk. The young widow was

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dressed in an elegant *negligee*, and wore on her head one of the Black Forest hats, whose wide brim reached to her shoulders. She advanced, holding in her hand a little bouquet of wild-flowers, and singing, half-aloud, an old Swabian melody. Bardanou hastened forward to salute her, and kissed her hands, as he had seen it done at the theatre. The pretty widow received him very graciously, and gave him an account of her ramble through the adjoining copse. In the course of her conversation, Madame de Randoux gave him to understand that she was deeply grieved at her uncle having consented before his death to dispose by lottery of Rovembourg, which had hitherto been an heirloom in their family. The 200,000 florins which this speculation added to her dowry was far from appearing to her a sufficient recompense for her loss. She would infinitely rather *sacrifice* 20,000 florins out of her *own* fortune to enter again into the possession of Rovembourg and its dependencies.

Bardanou understood that this statement of her wishes was meant as an indirect hint to himself; but he had already acquired too great a taste for playing the part of lord of the manor, to be willing to exchange his newly acquired privilege for a sum of money.

He replied to Madame de Randoux with a smile, that although Rovembourg had changed proprietors, it was not the less entirely at her service, and that he hoped she would continue to dispose of it as freely as she had hitherto done. The widow bowed with a graceful but impatient air.

'I see you do not choose to understand me,' she said with a smile: 'you wish *me* to be your guest at Rovembourg, whilst I rather desire you to be mine.'

'Of what consequence is it which is the host,' gallantly

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observed the Provençal, 'provided only you feel yourself at home?'

'At home!' gaily replied Madame de Randoux: 'you would be well punished if I were to take you at your word.'

'How so, madame?'

'Because a stranger is always in the way with a newly married couple.'

Bardanou made a movement of surprise.

'Pardon me,' she added; 'perhaps it is a secret; but Mademoiselle Nicette has been the first to betray it.'

'Why, really,' exclaimed the hairdresser, somewhat embarrassed, 'it was as yet only a project'——

'Which there is now nothing to prevent you from putting in execution.'

'That is true.'

'And I think that Mademoiselle Nicette would remind you, if it were necessary, of your engagement; for she would find it difficult to replace you, Monsieur *de* Bardanou.'

The hairdresser bowed, colouring with joy. It was the first time that this glorious little word (which designated him as noble) had been added to his name. At this moment Madame de Randoux appeared to him radiant with beauty.

'The end of the whole matter is,' continued she, 'that I must now abandon all hope of ever again returning to my beloved Rovembourg; and yet Heaven knows how much I would have sacrificed to retain it. What would you say, Monsieur Bardanou, if I were to own to you that I was on the point of sacrificing the whole happiness of my future life to this one object?'

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The Provençal felt almost bewildered, and could only stammer out a few disjointed sentences.

'Yes,' resumed the widow, as if she were replying to his unuttered thoughts, 'the happiness of my whole life. You have seen the Baron de Robach—the gentleman whose arrival here preceded yours by a few hours?'

Bardanou replied in the affirmative.

'Well, he is an old family friend, who has always been much attached to me, and who even seemed somewhat annoyed at my union with Monsieur de Randoux. Since my widowhood, he has rendered me many services, and has repeatedly made me an offer of his hand; but liberty was sweet to me; I shrunk from the thought of a second marriage, and constantly refused him. At length, however, when Rovembourg was put up to lottery, he perceived my distress at the prospect of leaving it, and playfully urged me to marry him if he won the château. I consented to do so; and he consequently took tickets to the amount of 50,000 florins. Until the day of drawing, I feared his being the winner; but now I am foolish enough to regret its having passed into other hands, and feel as if I should hardly have purchased it too dearly, even at the price of my hand.'

A sudden thought flashed across Bardanou's mind: he saw his fortune tripled, his position in life established—it was a second prize in the lottery—it would be madness not to take advantage of such an opportunity. He ventured, at first tremblingly, then with more confidence, to hint his wishes to the widow. She listened to him with hesitation, but apparently not altogether with indifference. Intoxicated by the visions of greatness which floated before his mind, he forgot the attachment of the innkeeper's daughter, and

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the ties which bound them together. He hastened into the château, and sought Nicette; but he did not seem to consider himself called upon even to offer any justification of his conduct.

Forgetting all that had passed between them, he spoke to Nicette as to a protégée whose happiness he would gladly insure. He had no desire to be the only one to profit by the happy chance which had enriched him; he was resolved to give her a liberal portion, and to provide for the happy man whom she might select as her partner for life. The poor young girl listened at first with perplexity; but by degrees, as Bardanou continued speaking, light broke in upon her mind, and with it came a grief so poignant, that she was totally unprepared for it. Still she was silent. With quivering lips and tearful eyes, she listened patiently to all the fine promises of the Provençal; and when he had finished, she calmly rose and walked towards the door.

'Where are you going, Nicette?' inquired Bardanou, startled by her silence.

'I am going to return home with my godfather,' was her only reply.

'And why must you go so soon?' continued the hairdresser.

Nicette made no reply, but she left the room. Bardanou felt heavy at heart. However he might seek to blind himself, the silent reproaches of conscience made themselves heard within, and his *feelings* protested against the casuistry of his reasoning. He rose from his seat, and traversed the room with hasty strides, vainly striving to recover his wonted calmness. Each moment he grew sadder and more discontented. It seemed a relief to him when he remembered, all on a sudden, that he had not yet tasted any food. He rang

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the bell; but when the footman appeared, he informed him that every one in the house had already breakfasted. Bardanou, who only wanted some pretext to vent his ill-humour, expressed his displeasure at not having been duly summoned to the morning repast. The footman replied that Monsieur le Baron had given him no orders on the subject. This was the signal for an explosion of anger on the part of our Provençal friend.

'The baron!' he exclaimed. 'And since when, may I ask, sir, have you learned that you must await the commands of the baron to attend on me? Which is master here—he or I? To whom does Rovembourg belong?'

'I know nothing about it as yet,' the footman brusquely replied.

'Ah, so you know nothing about it!' repeated Bardanou exasperated. 'Well, then, I will soon teach you to know, you blackguard. Leave this place; leave it directly, and never venture to let me set eyes on you again.'

The footman was about to make some reply, but the baron, who entered at that moment, made a sign to him, and he retired.

'You treat this poor fellow very roughly, Monsieur Bardanou,' said he, closing the door behind him.

'I shall treat him in whatever way I choose,' proudly replied the Provençal; 'and I think I have some ground for astonishment that any one should venture to give orders here beside myself.'

'In the first place,' politely replied the baron, 'I would beg of you to observe that, as executor of the former proprietor of Rovembourg, the administration of the affairs of the château was placed in my hands until the arrival of the new possessor.'

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'And I would beg of *you* to observe,' remarked the hairdresser, 'that the new possessor is here.'

'And from thence you come to the conclusion'——

'That every one should be master in his own house.'

The baron bowed. 'Incontestably so,' he replied. 'It only remains to be seen in *whose* house we are.'

'In whose house?' repeated the astonished Bardanou. 'Surely Monsieur de Robach cannot pretend ignorance on that head, since it was he who first informed me what number drew the prize?'

'I remember it perfectly.'

'And most probably you have not forgotten, either, that this number was 66; and that here it is, Monsieur le Baron, in my possession.'

The latter bent forward to look at the ticket which the hairdresser presented for his inspection. 'Pardon me,' said he, 'but I think Monsieur Bardanou has made a slight mistake.'

'How so?'

'I fancy that he has not noticed that on his ticket the dots precede the ciphers instead of following them.'

'Well, and what of that?'

'Only that Monsieur Bardanou has unfortunately read his number upside down, and that this number is 99!'

'99!' repeated the terrified hairdresser. 'What are you saying? But then what of 66?'

'Here it is,' replied the baron, shewing another ticket.

'What! yours?'

'Yes: the authenticity of the ticket has been recognised by the administration at Frankfort itself; all the formalities have been gone through: here is the deed which places me in full possession of the demesne of Rovembourg.'

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He handed to the Provençal a paper covered with stamps, seals, and signatures. Bardanou tried to peruse it, but a cloud obscured his sight; his whole frame trembled with emotion: he was obliged to sit down. The fall had been as sudden as the previous elevation, and he felt his strength failing him. However, when the first moment of bewilderment had passed away, he started up; his depression was succeeded by anger and doubt. He looked the baron full in the face. 'Then you deceived me at Oberhausberg?' he exclaimed.

'Say rather that I left you undisturbed in your error,' replied M. de Robach.

'It was treacherous and cruel,' interrupted Bardanou.

'No,' interposed the baron quietly; 'only a chastisement and a lesson. Seated in the balcony of the hotel, behind a curtain which concealed me, I heard you pronouncing judgment on me without knowing me, and accusing the rich in general of vanity, tyranny, ingratitude, and cupidity, and boasting that you would not yourself fall into these errors if fortune were to favour you in your turn. A curious chance led you to suppose that your desire was actually accomplished. I wished to see whether your principles were as strong as you believed them to be, and therefore suffered the illusion to continue.'

'And so, then, it *was* a delusion after all?' repeated Bardanou in a tone of despair, whilst he kept his eyes fixed upon the ticket.

'Yes,' replied M. de Robach more seriously; 'but what is *not* an illusion, is the line of conduct you have pursued from the moment in which you imagined yourself to be the proprietor of Rovembourg. Since yesterday, tell me, I pray you, which of us has shewn himself the most full of pride?

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Which has been most imperious and hard towards his inferiors? In which of us did Madame de Randoux's position awaken feelings of cupidity? And by whom has Nicette been cast off with cold ingratitude because she was poor?' The hairdresser hung down his head, overwhelmed with shame. 'You now see,' continued the baron, 'that one must learn to be more indulgent towards others, and more distrustful of one's self. All men bear within themselves the germs of the same weaknesses, but different positions may develop them under different forms. You must learn to excuse the rich man when he forgets himself so far as to become hardened by prosperity; and he must forgive his poorer brother if adversity sometimes sours his temper, and excites in him feelings of envy or ill-will. The best means of improving the different classes of society is, not by opposing them to each other, but by seeking to enlighten each according to its respective needs.'

'And it was to convey to me this lesson that Monsieur le Baron has exposed me to this reverse of fortune!' bitterly exclaimed Bardanou. 'He has been pleased to make me a subject for his observations: he desired to perform an experiment upon living flesh and blood, without disturbing himself about the results to which such an essay might lead.'

'Pardon me, Monsieur Bardanou,' said M. de Robach; 'Madame de Randoux, who bore a part in this mystification, has already repaired the misery you might have brought upon yourself; and the best proof of her success is, that here she is bringing you back Nicette.'

The god-daughter of old Töpfer made her appearance at this moment with the widow. The latter had found no difficulty in consoling the simple girl by persuading her that Bardanou's rupture with her was only a trial of her love,

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that the demesne of Rovembourg did not belong to him, and that he loved her better than ever. Nicette believed everything that was told her; and the Provençal, ashamed of his conduct, received her with a tenderness so full of humility, that it affected her even to tears. Whilst this explanation was taking place, the baron was speaking to Master Töpfer, and inducing him to consent to the marriage of Nicette, whom he expressed his intention to portion with a dowry of 8000 florins.

The newly betrothed couple set off the same evening on their return to Oberhausberg, where their marriage was duly celebrated about a month later. The lesson he had received proved of essential service to Bardanou, without, however, altogether curing him of his disposition to criticise. He was still at times disposed to give way to violent declamations against the rich and the powerful; but at such moments the thought of Rovembourg would suddenly flash across his mind, and at the remembrance of his own weakness he became more lenient in his judgment of others, and would cheerfully return to the duties of his appointed station.

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CLARA BRANDON.

In the month of February of the year following that which witnessed the successful establishment of the claim of Sir Harry Compton's infant son to his magnificent patrimony, Mr Samuel Ferret was travelling post with all the speed he could command towards Lancashire, in compliance with a summons from Lady Compton, requesting, in urgent terms, his immediate presence at the castle. It was wild and bitter weather, and the roads were in many places rendered dangerous, and almost impassable, by the drifting snow. Mr Ferret, however, pressed onwards with his habitual energy and perseverance; and, spite of all elemental and postboy opposition, succeeded in accomplishing his journey in much less time than, under the circumstances, could have been reasonably expected. But swiftly as, for those slow times, he pushed on, it is necessary I should anticipate, by a brief period, his arrival at his destination, in order to put the reader in possession of the circumstances which had occasioned the hurried and pressing message he had received.

Two days before, as Lady Compton and her sister, who

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had been paying a visit to Mrs Allington at the Grange, were returning home towards nine o'clock in the evening, they observed, as the carriage turned a sharp angle of the road leading through Compton Park, a considerable number of lighted lanterns borne hurriedly to and fro in various directions, by persons apparently in eager but bewildered pursuit of some missing object. The carriage was stopped, and in answer to the servants' inquiries, it was replied that Major Brandon's crazy niece had escaped from her uncle's house; and although traced by the snow-tracks as far as the entrance to the park, had not yet been recovered. Mrs Brandon had offered a reward of ten pounds to whoever should secure and reconduct her home; hence the hot pursuit of the fugitive, who, it was now supposed, must be concealed in the shrubberies. Rumours regarding this unfortunate young lady, by no means favourable to the character of her relatives as persons of humanity, had previously reached Lady Compton's ears; and she determined to avail herself, if possible, of the present opportunity to obtain a personal interview with the real or supposed lunatic. The men who had been questioned were informed that only the castle servants could be allowed to search for the missing person, either in the park or shrubberies; and that if there, she would be taken care of, and restored to her friends in the morning. The coachman was then ordered to drive on; but the wheels had not made half-a-dozen revolutions, when a loud shout at some distance, in the direction of the park, followed by a succession of piercing screams, announced the discovery and capture of the object of the chase. The horses were urged rapidly forward; and ere more than a minute had elapsed, the carriage drew up within a few yards of the hunted girl and her captors. The instant it stopped,

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Clara Brandon, liberating herself by a frenzied effort from the rude grasp in which she was held by an athletic young man, sprang wildly towards it, and with passionate entreaty implored mercy and protection. The young man, a son of Mrs Brandon's by a former husband, immediately re-seized her; and with fierce violence endeavoured to wrench her hand from the handle of the carriage-door, which she clutched with desperate tenacity. The door flew open, the sudden jerk disengaged her hold, and she struggled vainly in her captor's powerful grasp. 'Save me, save me!' she franticly exclaimed, as she felt herself borne off. 'You who are, they say, as kind and good as you are beautiful and happy, save me from this cruel man!'

Lady Compton, inexpressibly shocked by the piteous spectacle presented by the unhappy girl—her scanty clothing soiled, disarrayed, and torn by the violence of her struggles; her long flaxen tresses flowing disorderly over her face and neck in tangled dishevelment; and the pale, haggard, wild expression of her countenance—was for a few moments incapable of speech. Her sister was more collected. 'Violet,' she instantly remonstrated, 'do not permit this brutal violence.'

'What right has she or any one to interfere with us?' demanded the young man savagely. 'This girl is Major Brandon's ward, as well as niece, and *shall* return to her lawful home!—Stand back!' continued he, addressing the servants, who, at a gesture from Miss Dalston, barred his progress. 'Withstand me at your peril!'

'Force her from him!' exclaimed Lady Compton, recovering her voice. 'Gently, gently. I will be answerable for her safe custody till the morning.'

The athletic fellow struggled desperately; but however powerful and determined, he was only one man against a

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score, nearly all the bystanders being tenants or labourers on the Compton estates; and spite of his furious efforts, and menaces of law and vengeance, Clara was torn from him in a twinkling, and himself hurled with some violence prostrate on the road. 'Do not let them hurt the man,' said Lady Compton, as the servants placed the insensible girl in the carriage (she had fainted); 'and tell him that if he has really any legal claim to the custody of this unfortunate person, he must prefer it in the morning.'

Immediately on arrival at the castle, the escaped prisoner was conveyed to bed, and medical aid instantly summoned. When restored to consciousness, whether from the effect of an access of fever producing temporary delirium, or from confirmed mental disease, her speech was altogether wild and incoherent—the only at all consistent portions of her ravings being piteously iterated appeals to Lady Compton not to surrender her to her aunt-in-law, Mrs Brandon, of whom she seemed to entertain an overpowering, indefinable dread. It was evident she had been subjected to extremely brutal treatment—such as, in these days of improved legislation in such matters, and greatly advanced knowledge of the origin and remedy of cerebral infirmity, would not be permitted towards the meanest human being, much less a tenderly nurtured, delicate female. At length, under the influence of a composing draught, she sank gradually to sleep; and Lady Compton having determined to rescue her, if possible, from the suspicious custody of her relatives, and naturally apprehensive of the legal difficulties which she could not doubt would impede the execution of her generous, if somewhat Quixotic project, resolved on at once sending off an express for Mr Ferret, on whose acumen and zeal she knew she could place the fullest reliance.

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Clara Brandon's simple history may be briefly summed up. She was the only child of a Mr Frederick Brandon, who, a widower in the second year of his marriage, had since principally resided at the 'Elms,' a handsome mansion and grounds which he had leased of the uncle of the late Sir Harry Compton. At his decease, which occurred about two years previous to poor Clara's escape from confinement, as just narrated, he bequeathed his entire fortune, between two and three thousand pounds per annum, chiefly secured on land, to his daughter; appointed his elder brother, Major Brandon, sole executor of his will, and guardian of his child; and in the event of her dying before she had attained her majority—of which she wanted, at her father's death, upwards of three years—or without lawful issue, the property was to go to the major, to be by him willed at his pleasure. Major Brandon, whose physical and mental energies had been prematurely broken down—he was only in his fifty-second year—either by excess or hard service in the East, perhaps both, had married late in life the widow of a brother-officer, and the mother of a grown-up son. The lady, a woman of inflexible will, considerable remains of a somewhat masculine beauty, and about ten years her husband's junior, held him in a state of thorough pupilage; and, unchecked by him, devoted all her energies to bring about, by fair or foul means, a union between Clara and her own son, a cub of some two or three and twenty years of age, whose sole object in seconding his mother's views upon Clara was the acquisition of her wealth. According to popular surmise and report, the young lady's mental infirmity had been brought about by the persecutions she had endured at the hands of Mrs Brandon, with a view to force her into a marriage she detested. The most reliable authority for

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the truth of these rumours was Susan Hopley, now in the service of Lady Compton, but who had lived for many years with Mr Frederick Brandon and his daughter. She had been discharged about six months after her master's decease by Mrs Major Brandon for alleged impertinence; and so thoroughly convinced was Susan that the soon afterwards alleged lunacy of Clara was but a juggling pretence to excuse the restraint under which her aunt-in-law, for the furtherance of her own vile purposes, had determined to keep her, that although out of place at the time, she devoted all the savings of her life, between eighty and ninety pounds, to procure 'justice' for the ill-used orphan. This article, Susan was advised, could be best obtained of the Lord Chancellor; and proceedings were accordingly taken before the keeper of the king's conscience, in order to change the custody of the pretended lunatic. The affidavits filed in support of the petition were, however, so loose and vague, and were met with such positive counter-allegations, that the application was at once dismissed with costs; and poor Susan—rash suitor for 'justice'—reduced to absolute penury. These circumstances becoming known to Lady Compton, Susan was taken into her service; and it was principally owing to her frequently iterated version of the affair that Clara had been forcibly rescued from Mrs Brandon's son.

On the following morning the patient was much calmer, though her mind still wandered somewhat. Fortified by the authority of the physician, who certified that to remove her, or even to expose her to agitation, would be dangerous, if not fatal, Lady Compton not only refused to deliver her up to Major and Mrs Brandon, but to allow them to see her. Mrs Brandon, in a towering rage, posted off to the nearest magistrate, to demand the assistance of peace-officers in

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obtaining possession of the person of the fugitive. That functionary would, however, only so far comply with the indignant lady's solicitations, as to send his clerk to the castle to ascertain the reason of the young lady's detention; and when his messenger returned with a note, enclosing a copy of the physician's certificate, he peremptorily decided that the conduct of Lady Compton was not only perfectly justifiable, but praiseworthy, and that the matter must remain over till the patient was in a condition to be moved. Things were precisely in this state, except that Clara Brandon had become perfectly rational; and but for an irrepressible nervous dread of again falling into the power of her unscrupulous relative, quite calm, when Mr Samuel Ferret made his wished-for appearance on the scene of action.

Long and anxious was the conference which Mr Ferret held with his munificent client and her interesting protégée, if conference that may be called in which the astute attorney enacted the part of listener only, scarcely once opening his thin, cautious lips. In vain did his eager brain silently ransack the whole armoury of the law; no weapon could he discern which afforded the slightest hope of fighting a successful battle with a legally appointed guardian for the custody of his ward. And yet Mr Ferret felt, as he looked upon the flashing eye and glowing countenance of Lady Compton, as she recounted a few of the grievous outrages inflicted upon the fair and helpless girl reclining beside her —whose varying cheek and meek suffused eyes bore eloquent testimony to the truth of the relation—that he would willingly exert a vigour even *beyond* the law to meet his client's wishes, could he but see his way to a safe result. At length a ray of light, judging from his suddenly gleaming

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eyes, seemed to have broken upon the troubled chambers of his brain, and he rose somewhat hastily from his chair.

'By-the-bye, I will just step and speak to this Susan Hopley, if your ladyship can inform me in what part of the lower regions I am likely to meet with her.'

'Let me ring for her.'

'No; if you please, not. What I have to ask her is of very little importance; still, to summon her here might give rise to surmises, reports, and so on, which it may be as well to avoid. I had much rather see her accidentally, as it were.'

'As you please. You will find her somewhere about the housekeeper's apartments. You know her by sight, I think?'

'Perfectly; and with your leave, I'll take the opportunity of directing the horses to be put to. I must be in London by noon to-morrow, if possible;' and away Mr Ferret bustled.

'Susan,' said Mr Ferret a few minutes afterwards, 'step this way; I want to have a word with you. Now, tell me are you goose enough to expect you will ever see the money again you so foolishly threw into the bottomless pit of Chancery?'

'Of course I shall, Mr Ferret, as soon as ever Miss Clara comes to her own. She mentioned it only this morning, and said she was sorry she could not repay me at once.'

'You are a sensible girl, Susan, though you *did* go to law with the Lord Chancellor! I want you to be off with me to London; and then perhaps we may get your money sooner than you expect.'

'Oh, bother the money! Is that *all* you want me to go to Lunnon for?'

Mr Ferret replied with a wink of such exceeding intelli-

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gence, that Susan at once declared she should be ready to start in ten minutes at the latest.

'That 's a good creature; and, Susan, as there 's not the slightest occasion to let all the world know who 's going to run off with you, it may be as well for you to take your bundle and step on a mile or so on the road, say to the turn, just beyond the first turnpike.' Susan nodded with brisk good-humour, and disappeared in a twinkling.

An hour afterwards, Mr Ferret was on his way back to London, having first impressed upon Lady Compton the necessity of immediately relieving herself of the grave responsibility she had incurred towards Major Brandon for the safe custody of his ward, by sending her home immediately. He promised to return on the third day from his departure; but on the nature of the measures he intended to adopt, or the hopes he entertained of success, he was inflexibly silent; and he moreover especially requested that no one, not even Miss Brandon, should know of Susan Hopley's journey to the metropolis.

Mr Ferret, immediately on his arrival in town, called at my chambers, and related with his usual minuteness and precision as many of the foregoing particulars as he knew and thought proper to communicate to me. For the rest I am indebted to subsequent conversations with the different parties concerned.

'Well,' said I, as soon as he had concluded, 'what course do you propose to adopt?'

'I wish you to apply, on this affidavit, for a writ of *habeas ad sub.*, to bring up the body of Clara Brandon. Judge Bailey will be at chambers at three o'clock: it is now more than half-past two, and I can be off on my return by four at latest.'

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'A writ of habeas!' I exclaimed with astonishment. 'Why, what end can that answer? The lady will be remanded, and you and I shall be laughed at for our pains.'

This writ of *habeas corpus* '*ad subjiciendum*,' I had better explain to the non-professional reader, is the great *prerogative* writ, the operation of which is sometimes suspended by the legislature during political panics. It is grounded on the principle that the sovereign has at all times a right to inquire, through the judges of the superior courts, by what authority his or her subject is held in constraint. It issues, as a matter of right, upon the filing of an affidavit, averring that to the best of the belief of the deponent the individual sought to be brought up is illegally confined; and it is of the essence of the proceeding, that the person alleged to be suffering unlawful constraint should actually be brought before the 'Queen herself;' that is, before one or more of the judges of the court which has issued the writ, who, if they find *the detention illegal*, the only question at issue upon this writ, may discharge or bail the party. It was quite obvious, therefore, that in this case such a proceeding would be altogether futile, as the detention in the house of her guardian, under the sanction, too, of the Lord Chancellor, the *ex officio* custodier of all lunatics—of a ward of alleged disordered intellect—was clearly legal, at least *primâ facie* so, and not to be disturbed under a *habeas ad sub.*, at all events.

'Perhaps so,' replied Ferret quite coolly in reply to my exclamation; 'but I am determined to try every means of releasing the unfortunate young lady from the cruel thraldom in which she is held by that harridan of an aunt-in-law. She is no more really insane than you are; but at the same time so excitable upon certain topics, that it might be

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perhaps difficult to disabuse the Chancellor or a jury of the impression so industriously propagated to her prejudice. The peremptory rejection by her guardian of young Burford's addresses, though sanctioned by her father: you know the Burfords?'

'Of Grosvenor Street, you mean—the East India director?'

'Yes, his son; and that reminds me that the declaration in that everlasting exchequer case must be filed to-morrow. Confound it, how this flying about the country puts one out! I thought some one had kidnapped her son, or fired Compton Castle at least. By the way, I am much deceived if there isn't a wedding there before long.'

'Indeed!'

'Yes, Miss Dalston with Sir Jasper's eldest hope.'

'You don't mean it?'

'*They* do, at all events, and that is much more to the purpose. A fine young fellow enough, and sufficiently rich too'——

'All which rambling talk and anecdote,' cried I, interrupting him, 'means, if I have any skill in reading Mr Ferret, that that gentleman, having some ulterior purpose in view, which I cannot for the moment divine, is determined to have this writ, and does not wish to be pestered with any argument on the subject. Be it so: it is your affair, not mine. And now, as it is just upon three o'clock, let me see your affidavit.'

I ran it over. 'Rather loose this, Mr Ferret, but I suppose it will do.'

'Well, it *is* rather loose, but I could not with safety sail much closer to the wind. By-the-bye, I think you had better first apply for a rule to stay proceedings against the bail in that case of Turner; and after that is decided, just

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ask for this writ, off-hand, as it were, and as a matter of course. His lordship may not then scrutinise the affidavit quite so closely as if he thought counsel had been brought to chambers purposely to apply for it.'

'Cautious Mr Ferret! Well, come along, and I'll see what I can do.'

The writ was obtained without difficulty; few questions were asked; and at my request the judge made it returnable immediately. By four o'clock, Mr Ferret, who could fortunately sleep as well in a post-chaise as in a feather-bed, was, as he had promised himself, on his road to Lancashire once more, where he had the pleasure of serving Major Brandon personally; at the same time tendering in due form the one shilling per mile fixed by the statute as preliminary travelling charges. The vituperative eloquence showered upon Mr Ferret by the major's lady was, I afterwards heard, extremely copious and varied, and was borne by him, as I could easily believe, with the most philosophic composure.

In due time the parties appeared before Mr Justice Bailey. Miss Brandon was accompanied by her uncle, his wife, and a solicitor; and spite of everything I could urge, the judge, as I had foreseen, refused to interfere in the matter. The poor girl was dreadfully agitated, but kept, nevertheless, her eyes upon Mr Ferret, as the source from which, spite of what was passing around her, effectual succour was sure to come. As for that gentleman himself, he appeared composedly indifferent to the proceedings; and indeed, I thought, seemed rather relieved than otherwise when they terminated. I could not comprehend him. Mrs Brandon, the instant the case was decided, clutched Clara's arm within hers, and, followed by her husband and the solicitor, sailed

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out of the apartment with an air of triumphant disdain and pride. Miss Brandon looked round for Ferret, but not perceiving him—he had left hastily an instant or two before—her face became deadly pale, and the most piteous expression of hopeless despair I had ever beheld broke from her troubled but singularly expressive eyes. I mechanically followed, with a half-formed purpose of remonstrating with Major Brandon in behalf of the unfortunate girl, and was by that means soon in possession of the key to Mr Ferret's apparently inexplicable conduct.

The Brandon party walked very fast, and I had scarcely got up with them as they were turning out of Chancery Lane into Fleet Street, when two men, whose vocation no accustomed eye could for an instant mistake, arrested their further progress. 'This lady,' said one of the men, slightly touching Miss Brandon on the shoulder, 'is, I believe, Clara Brandon?'

'Yes, she is; and what of that, fellow?' demanded the major's lady with indignant emphasis.

'Not much, ma'am,' replied the sheriff's officer, 'when you are used to it. It is my unpleasant duty to arrest her for the sum of eighty-seven pounds, indorsed on this writ, issued at the suit of one Susan Hopley.'

'Arrest her!' exclaimed Mrs Brandon; 'why, she is a minor!'

'Minor or major, ma'am, makes very little difference to us. She can plead that hereafter, you know.—In the meantime, miss, please to step into this coach,' replied the officer, holding the door open.

'But she 's a person of unsound mind,' screamed the lady, as Clara, nothing loath, sprang into the vehicle.

'So are most people that do business with our establish-

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ment,' responded the imperturbable official, as he shut and fastened the door.—'Here is my card, sir,' he added, addressing the attorney, who now came up. 'You see where to find the lady, if her friends wish to give bail to the sheriff, or, what is always more satisfactory, pay the debt and costs.' He then jumped on the box, his follower got up behind, and away drove the coach, leaving the discomfited major and his fiery better-half in a state of the blankest bewilderment!

'Why, what *is* the meaning of this?' at length gasped Mrs Brandon, fiercely addressing the attorney, as if *he* were a *particeps criminis* in the affair.

'The meaning, my dear madame, is, that Miss Clara Brandon is arrested for debt, and carried off to a sponging-house; and that unless you pay the money, or file bail, she will to-morrow be lodged in jail,' replied the unmoved man of law.

'Bail! money! How are we to do either in London, away from home?' demanded the major with, for him, much emotion.

I did not wait to hear more, but, almost suffocated with laughter at the success of Ferret's audacious *ruse*, hastened over to the Temple. I was just leaving chambers for the night—about ten o'clock I think it must have been—when Ferret, in exuberant spirits, burst into the room.

'Well, sir, what do you think *now* of a writ *ad sub.*?'

'Why, I think, Mr Ferret,' replied I, looking as serious as I could, 'that yours is very sharp practice; that the purpose you have put it to is an abuse of the writ; that the arrest is consequently illegal; and that a judge would, upon motion, quash it with costs.'

'To be sure he would: who doubts that? Let him, and

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welcome! In the meantime, Clara Brandon is safe beyond the reach of all the judges or chancellors that ever wore horse-hair, and that everlasting simpleton of a major and his harridan wife roaming the metropolis like distracted creatures; and that I take to be the real essence of the thing, whatever the big-wigs may decide about the shells!'

'I suppose the plaintiff soon discharged her debtor out of custody?'

'Without loss of time, you may be sure. Miss Brandon, I may tell *you*, is with the Rev. Mr Derwent at Brompton. You know him: the newly married curate of St Margaret's that was examined in that will-case. Well, him: he is an intelligent, high-principled man; and I have no doubt that, under his and Mrs Derwent's care, all trace of Miss Brandon's mental infirmity will disappear long before she attains her majority next June twelvemonth; whilst the liberal sum per month which Lady Compton will advance, will be of great service to him.'

'That appears all very good. But are you sure you can effectually conceal the place of her retreat?'

'I have no fear: the twigs that will entangle her precious guardians in the labyrinths of a false clue are already set and limed. Before to-morrow night they will have discovered, by means of their own wonderfully penetrative sagacity, that Clara has been spirited over to France; and before three months are past, the same surprising intelligence will rejoice in the discovery that she expired in a *maison de santé*—fine comfortable repose, in which fool's paradise I hope to have the honour of awakening them about next June twelvemonth, and not as at present advised before.'

Everything fortunately turned out as Mr Ferret anticipated; and when a few months had glided by, Clara Brandon

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was a memory only, save of course to the few intrusted with the secret.

The whirligig of time continued as ever to speed on its course, and bring round in due season its destined revenges. The health, mental and bodily, of Miss Brandon rapidly improved under the kind and judicious treatment of Mr and Mrs Derwent; and long before the attainment of her majority, was pronounced by competent authority to be thoroughly re-established. The day following that which completed her twenty-first year, Mr Ferret, armed with the necessary authority, had the pleasure of announcing to the relict of Major Brandon (he had been dead some months), and to her brutal son, that they must forthwith depart from the home in which they, to the very moment of his announcement, thought themselves secure; and surrender every shilling of the property they had so long dreamed was their own. They were prostrated by the intelligence, and proved as mean and servile in the hour of adversity, as they had been insolent and cruel in the day of fancied success and prosperity. The pension of three hundred pounds a year for both their lives, proffered by Miss Brandon, was eagerly accepted; and they returned to the obscurity from which they had by accident emerged.

About six months afterwards, I had the pleasure of drawing up the marriage settlements between Clara Brandon and Herbert Burford; and a twelvemonth after, that of standing sponsor to one of the lustiest brats ever sprinkled at a font: none of which delightful results, if we are to believe Mr Ferret, would have ever been arrived at had not he, at a very critical moment, refused to take counsel's opinion upon the virtues, capabilities, and powers contained in the great writ of *habeas corpus ad subjiciendum*.

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SINGULAR CAPTIVITY.

My grandfather rented a large farm in one of the Western Islands. It lay on the sea-coast, and there were several small islands attached to it, where he kept sheep and black-cattle. The largest of these, about two miles long by one in breadth, though covered with heather, yielded excellent pasture for several hundred sheep and some score of black-cattle. The distance between it and the mainland being only about three miles, it was generally of easy access; and my grandfather paid frequent visits there, to survey the state of the stock and pasture.

It was on a Tuesday morning, early in the summer of 179–, that, after an early breakfast, he set out for the island in a small Norwegian skiff—the crew consisting of three men and a lad of sixteen. The morning was fine, and the day seemed to promise well, though the wind freshened a little as they left the shore. It was from the east, however; a wind which sometimes, on the western coast, at that season of the year, springs rapidly into a gale; but the opportunity of a fine day was too good to be despised in the

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Hebrides, and the skiff with its party soon reached the shore of Bernera. They spent a considerable time in traversing the island; and after completing their survey, proceeded to re-embark. The wind had by this time risen considerably, and was every moment on the increase; but the skiff was launched, and my grandfather was confident that they would be able, with vigorous pulling, to reach the mainland before the gale should have time to become greatly more violent. His anticipations were, however, a little too sanguine. They had not gone far when they found that all their efforts propelled the skiff but very tardily against the wind, which now blew, according to the phrase, 'as if from the mouth of a battery.' The sea ran high; and the low skiff, totally unsuited to such rough work, shipped large quantities of water. To go forward was evidently rash in the highest degree, if not impossible; and to return to Bernera was not a much more hopeful undertaking; for the sea ran in mountains on the beach, and the only landing-place in the island was at no time very safe. The only chance of safety seemed to be in making for another island, or rather islet, at some distance farther out to sea, at the back of which they thought a landing could be effected. The skiff's head was accordingly turned towards this point; and the wind being now almost astern, she ploughed along without taking in much water. Relieved as they were by the hope of making any land whatever, the prospect before them, in the event of a continuance of the storm, was by no means cheering. The islet is not more than half a mile long, without any water, and totally barren. Anything, however, in anticipation, was better than the immediate prospect of being swamped; and the whole party were sincerely thankful when the boat at length touched the shore.

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The landing was itself a ticklish affair, but was accomplished in safety, and the skiff was hauled upon the beach. They had put her several feet beyond high-water mark, and were going to leave her there, when one of the crew, old John Mackenzie, who had the character of being a crotchety wiseacre of a man, proposed to send her up one oar's length farther.

'I have seen stranger things,' said he, 'than that the tide should cover many feet of the green grass to-night.'

'Come, come, John,' said my grandfather, 'none of your old-wifish precautions! You have doubtless seen many wondrous sights; but no tide since the Deluge ever touched the spot you stand on.'

'Very well, sir,' said John, mildly deferring to the judgment of one who had not half his experience in the matter, but whom he felt bound to look up to as the concentration of all knowledge and wisdom: 'I hope you may not have to confess that I gave a sound advice for once.'

The skiff was accordingly left as it had been placed, with the oars inside; and our party went in search of shelter. Of this they knew there was little to be had, for the islet could not boast of even a sheep-cot, and it lies much exposed to every wind. They were all drenched to the skin, the evening was closing, and the east wind blew keen and bitter, as is its wont: hardy as they were, they could not resist violent shiverings. They had not, which was somewhat remarkable, even a drop of whisky to revive them. My grandfather set his companions to pull the heather with which the island was thickly covered, and shewed the example himself. The exercise restored warmth to their limbs; and after pulling till they were tired, they heaped the heather at the side of a rock, and laid them down in their wet clothing. A nice hot-bed that was for engendering

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rheumatism; and so my poor progenitor experienced in many a day of subsequent suffering. During the night the cold was so keen, that, to keep themselves from absolutely stiffening, they got up at intervals and resumed the task of pulling the heather. At length day dawned, and disclosed to them a raging sea: the storm had risen to a pitch of terrible fury, and the clouds of spray that were swept along the rocks almost concealed the shore from their view. The spectacle, though doubtless sublime in the highest degree, was too depressing for them to regard it with any feelings save those of despondency. Their first impulse was to go down to the shore and see how it fared with the skiff. Their dismay may be imagined on finding her gone! Old John had rightly surmised that the tide would be unprecedentedly high: it rose full twenty feet beyond the ordinary mark; and the green grass, strewn with foam and sea-weed, bore ample testimony to the old man's despised sagacity. The feelings of the party were at that moment of a very unenviable kind. There were they left on that wretched islet, deprived of their only chance of escape, without a particle of food, and, what was worse, without a drop of water. The chance of the storm's abating was very slender, such gales often holding out for many days; and even should it abate, they had little hope of being observed from the shore—a distance of several miles. A sad situation it was for a worthy gentleman with a young family, who had all his life eschewed seafaring adventure beyond a three-mile limit, and four poor decent men, whose marine experience had never led them into great perils.*

Meantime, ashore, there was no less anxiety and distress.

* In that part of the country, the men did not engage in fishing.

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The skiff had been seen making its way a short distance from the shore of Bernera, and there was lost sight of. The state of the sea was such that it seemed out of the question that a craft so small could live in it, and the sudden disappearance of the skiff confirmed their worst fears. There seemed little doubt that she had been swamped, and that every soul in her had gone to the bottom. On the Wednesday, couriers were sent in all directions down the coast, as it was supposed she might have been carried ashore in that quarter. They deemed their conjectures realised, when, before nightfall, a messenger returned with the sorrowful tidings that the boat had gone ashore that morning at a place many miles down the island, where a jutting promontory had arrested it on its way to the Atlantic. My poor grandmother's state of mind was most melancholy. She was a woman of keen and tender feelings, and she gave way to unbounded sorrow, while the farm-people, who had congregated at the 'Big House' to hear the tidings, manifested their attachment by unrestrained grief. My grandfather was universally beloved, and his loss was felt to be a general calamity. One man, however, more hopeful than the rest, suggested the possibility of their having after all gone back to Bernera on their sudden disappearance, and of their being all safe there still. The fate of the skiff was accounted for by the height of the tide and the dreadful sea that ran on the shore. This conjecture seemed not ill-founded, and again the hopes of the mourners were revived. But what could be done for the luckless adventurers? The storm still raged with unabated fury: a ship of the line could not lie to between Bernera and the mainland. Nothing, at least, could be attempted till the morning. That was a night of sad suspense, no less to those ashore than to the poor

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prisoners on the islet. They had spent a great part of the day on the highest ground, trying in vain to attract observation. It was so flat, and so covered with long heather, that, besides being a good way from the shore, a human figure could hardly be descried on it without very close observation. But it never had occurred to any one that they could have gone there, so that while every eye was eagerly directed to Bernera, no one thought of casting a look towards the smaller island. They were now beginning to feel the want of food and the pains of thirst. They tried to drink out of some brackish pools on the rocks above the shore, but found the water intolerably salt and disagreeable. One of them had a small piece of bread and cheese in his pocket, which he generously gave to the young lad, who suffered most from hunger, as well as from cold. They had tried in vain by every conceivable means to strike a fire; in short, the whole of Wednesday passed very drearily. At length night closed, and they crept to their heathery couch with heavy hearts. The weary night was spent, and Thursday morning dawned, but with no lull of the tempest. The feelings of the poor men were now of the most truly bitter kind. It seemed that they were doomed to starve within almost a cannon-shot of shore, without the possibility of making known their situation, and even in that case without any chance of help. The islet lay opposite a part of the mainland where there were no inhabitants, and rarely any one passed, so that they might be there for a month without ever attracting observation. They now began to suffer severely from thirst and hunger; and all felt that they could not hold out much longer. The day passed dismally, with no abatement of the storm, and evening closed darkly and gloomily, as if foreboding their inevitable fate.

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Meantime, ashore, there was restless anxiety mingling now with terrible misgivings. No sign had been seen to indicate that the lost ones had gained the island of Bernera, as was conjectured: had they been there, it seemed hardly possible that they could be unnoticed, for there were several eminences where they might easily display themselves. The storm held on relentlessly, precluding all possibility of trying the ferry. There had been a very slight fall of the wind a little before noon, and a boat had been launched; but the crew were forced to put back for their lives before they had gone many yards from the shore. The case was now at its worst. There did not appear to be the remotest chance of their having escaped the angry sea; but still hope was not entirely given up till that island should have been explored. About one o'clock on Friday morning it began to rain heavily, with frequent peals of thunder. My grandfather described the scene as very solemn. It seemed as if the voice of the Eternal himself were thus addressed to them in the darkness of the night, and amid the howling of the tempest, to bring to their remembrance that He was around them, and had the elements at His bidding—that they were in His hand to deliver them yet, if it were His will. They all united in commending themselves to His mercy; afterwards they felt resigned to their fate. The rain poured for the following six hours literally in bucketsful: they were drenched till they became quite helpless with the cold and discomfort: they kept close together, to maintain, if possible, a little warmth. At length, about seven, the rain began to abate; the storm had by this time fallen into a dead calm; not a breath disturbed the black and glassy surface of the sea; the long heavy swell came with a saddening murmur on the shore, and even the furious activity of the storm

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seemed more cheerful than the sullen calm that reigned—too late, as they supposed, to bring them succour. Oh, with what heavy hearts they cast their longing glances to the shore, where they could see the smoke rising gently in the calm morning from the homes they expected to see no more! They could distinguish a throng of people who had gathered to see a boat launched. Hope revived within them at the sight, but soon gave way to despondency when they saw the course she took. The chance of her coming so far out of the way as their prison islet, was too feeble a stay to rest any hope on. The party from the shore, among whom was my mother's only brother, pulled for Bernera with might and main, and soon were ashore. They ran up the landing-place, calling aloud for the lost ones; but no voice answered to the sound. They made for the cattle-pen, where it was probable they had crept for shelter during the rain: they found no one there. They searched the island all over, but found not a trace of the missing. At last it was suggested that they might have buried themselves in a haystack that was there for the use of the cattle, and were too weak to make their presence known. A host of eager hands soon tore up the stack, and spread it around: all was vacancy. My uncle, who shared my grandmother's warm feelings, on seeing all hope thus destroyed, and thinking how he should meet his sister, fainted away like a woman.

All this time my grandfather and the rest were in a state of intolerable suspense. Eagerly they kept their eyes fixed on Bernera, and watched the boat leaving it in painful anxiety. To attract, if possible, the notice of the exploring party, they stood together on the highest ground; but even that lay so low, that they were never observed, and they had nothing with which they could make a signal. They

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were by this time scarcely able to stand. While thus watching in breathless suspense, my grandfather perceived an object that looked like a pole floating towards the shore. The ebb tide had borne it from the mainland, and was carrying it out to sea. 'If they had only that pole!' was the thought that flashed on them all like a sunbeam in the gloom; and now every eye was bent on the floating spar with trembling interest, their hopes rising and sinking with each roll of the waves that bore it along. It was impossible to predict with certainty that it would not, after all, pass clear of the point on which they had clustered. My grandfather was a good swimmer, but in his exhausted state he could not trust himself to the water. While they were thus riveted with the most intense interest on the object on which their final deliverance seemed to depend, they had not noticed till now that their friends were half-way across the ferry. The next was a moment of agonising suspense. The oar, as they now saw it to be, was passing along within a yard of the shore; one rolling wave would carry it for ever beyond their reach! It came, and, O joy! turned the blade to the rock; and with the desperate clutch of a drowning man, my grandfather snatched it out of the waves.

With all their remaining strength they scrambled to their old station; and putting a coat on the top of the oar, hoisted it in the air, and watched with eagerness for the effect. The boat had by this time reached within a short distance of the land. Every eye of the gathered crowd was fixed on her with deep anxiety, and a loud lamentation arose when it was seen that she came as she had gone. But a louder shout of joy was raised when, a moment after, a strange signal was descried on the low level of the islet. The boat's head was turned instantaneously seaward, and two men at each oar

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sent her through the water like an arrow. After a hard pull, they touched the shore, where the now nearly prostrated group sat waiting their landing. The excitement had till this moment kept up their strength, but now they could not walk to the boat, and had to be lifted in. They had been upwards of seventy hours without food or drink! Joyfully did the boat now turn to the shore, where their landing was hailed with delight by a perfect 'gathering of the clans' from the surrounding neighbourhood. Some weeks elapsed before they had fully recovered their strength; and some of the party had received a constitutional injury that did not so soon pass away. Two things at least my grandfather said he had learned from the adventure—the one was, *not to be positive;* the other, *never to disregard the counsel of experience, even when its cautions seem overstrained.*

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JAMES HARVEY:

A VICTIM OF CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE.

SOMETHING more than half a century ago, a person, in going along Holborn, might have seen, near the corner of one of the thoroughfares which diverge towards Russell Square, the respectable-looking shop of a glover and haberdasher named James Harvey, a man generally esteemed by his neighbours, and who was usually considered well to do in the world. Like many London tradesmen, Harvey was originally from the country. He had come up to town when a poor lad to push his fortune, and by dint of steadiness and civility, and a small property left him by a distant relation, he had been able to get into business on his own account, and to attain that most important element of success in London—'a connection.' Shortly after setting up in the world, he married a young woman from his native town, to whom he had been engaged ever since his school-days; and at the time our narrative commences he was the father of three children.

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James Harvey's establishment was one of the best frequented of its class in the street. You could never pass without seeing customers going in or out. There was evidently not a little business going forward. But although, to all appearance, a flourishing concern, the proprietor of the establishment was surprised to find that he was continually pinched in his circumstances. No matter what was the amount of business transacted over the counter, he never got any richer.

At the period referred to, shopkeeping had not attained that degree of organisation, with respect to counter-men and cashiers, which now distinguishes the great houses of trade. The primitive till was not yet superseded. This was the weak point in Harvey's arrangements; and not to make a needless number of words about it, the poor man was regularly robbed by a shopman, whose dexterity in pitching a guinea into the drawer, so as to make it jump, unseen, with a jerk into his hand, was worthy of Herr Dobler, or any other master of the sublime art of jugglery.

Good-natured and unsuspicious, perhaps also not sufficiently vigilant, Harvey was long in discovering how he was pillaged. Cartwright, the name of the person who was preying on his employer, was not a young man. He was between forty and fifty years of age, and had been in various situations, where he had always given satisfaction, except on the score of being somewhat gay and somewhat irritable. Privately, he was a man of loose habits, and for years his extravagances had been paid for by property clandestinely abstracted from his too confiding master. Slow to believe in the reality of such wickedness, Mr Harvey could with difficulty entertain the suspicions which began to dawn on

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his mind. At length all doubt was at an end. He detected Cartwright in the very act of carrying off goods to a considerable amount. The man was tried at the Old Bailey for the offence; but through a technical informality in the indictment, acquitted.

Unable to find employment, and with a character gone, the liberated thief became savage, revengeful, and desperate. Instead of imputing his fall to his own irregularities, he considered his late unfortunate employer as the cause of his ruin; and now he bent all the energies of his dark nature to destroy the reputation of the man whom he had betrayed and plundered. Of all the beings self-delivered to the rule of unscrupulous malignity, with whom it has been my fate to come professionally in contact, I never knew one so utterly fiendish as this discomfited pilferer. Frenzied with his imaginary wrongs, he formed the determination to labour, even if it were for years, to ruin his victim. Nothing short of death should divert him from this the darling object of his existence.

Animated by these diabolical passions, Cartwright proceeded to his work. Harvey, he had too good reason to know, was in debt to persons who had made him advances; and by means of artfully concocted anonymous letters, evidently written by some one conversant with the matters on which he wrote, he succeeded in alarming the haberdasher's creditors. The consequences were—demands of immediate payment, and, in spite of the debtor's explanations and promises, writs, heavy law expenses, ruinous sacrifices, and ultimate bankruptcy. It may seem almost too marvellous for belief, but the story of this terrible revenge and its consequences is no fiction. Every incident in my narrative is true, and the whole may be found in hard

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outline in the records of the courts with which a few years ago I was familiar.

The humiliated and distressed feelings of Harvey and his family may be left to the imagination. When he found himself a ruined man, I daresay his mental sufferings were sufficiently acute. Yet he did not sit down in despair. To re-establish himself in business in England appeared hopeless; but America presented itself as a scene where industry might find a reward; and by the kindness of some friends, he was enabléd to make preparations to emigrate with his wife and children. Towards the end of February he quitted London for one of the great sea-ports, where he was to embark for Boston. On arriving there with his family, Mr Harvey took up his abode at a principal hotel. This, in a man of straitened means, was doubtless imprudent; but he afterwards attempted to explain the circumstance by saying, that as the ship in which he had engaged his passage was to sail on the day after his arrival, he had preferred incurring a slight additional expense rather than that his wife—who was now, with failing spirits, nursing an infant—should be exposed to coarse associations and personal discomfort. In the expectation, however, of being only one night in the hotel, Harvey was unfortunately disappointed. Ship-masters, especially those commanding emigrant vessels, were then, as now, habitual promise-breakers; and although each succeeding sun was to light them on their way, it was fully a fortnight before the ship stood out to sea. By that time a second and more dire reverse had occurred in the fortunes of the luckless Harvey.

Cartwright, whose appetite for vengeance was but whetted by his first success, had never lost sight of the movements of his victim; and now he had followed him to the place

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of his embarkation, with an eager but undefined purpose of working him some further and more deadly mischief. Stealthily he hovered about the house which sheltered the unconscious object of his malicious hate, plotting, as he afterwards confessed, the wildest schemes for satiating his revenge. Several times he made excuses for calling at the hotel, in the hope of observing the nature of the premises, taking care, however, to avoid being seen by Mr Harvey or his family. A fortnight passed away, and the day of departure of the emigrants arrived without the slightest opportunity occurring for the gratification of his purposes. The ship was leaving her berth; most of the passengers were on board; Mrs Harvey and the children, with nearly the whole of the luggage, were already safely in the vessel; Mr Harvey only remained on shore to purchase some trifling article, and to settle his bill at the hotel on removing his last trunk. Cartwright had tracked him all day; he could not attack him in the street; and he finally followed him to the hotel, in order to wreak his vengeance on him in his private apartment, of the situation of which he had informed himself.

Harvey entered the hotel first, and before Cartwright came up, he had gone down a passage into the bar to settle the bill which he had incurred for the last two days. Not aware of this circumstance, Cartwright, in the bustle which prevailed, went up-stairs to Mr Harvey's bedroom and parlour, in neither of which, to his surprise, did he find the occupant; and he turned away discomfited. Passing along towards the chief staircase, he perceived a room of which the door was open, and that on the table there lay a gold watch and appendages. Nobody was in the apartment: the gentleman who occupied it had only a few moments before

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gone to his bed-chamber for a brief space. Quick as lightning a diabolical thought flashed through the brain of the villain, who had been baffled in his original intentions. He recollected that he had seen a trunk in Harvey's room, and that the keys hung in the lock. An inconceivably short space of time served for him to seize the watch, to deposit it at the bottom of Harvey's trunk, and to quit the hotel by a back-stair, which led by a short cut to the harbour. The whole transaction was done unperceived, and the wretch at least departed unnoticed.

Having finished his business at the bar, Mr Harvey repaired to his room, locked his trunk, which, being of a small and handy size, he mounted on his shoulder, and proceeded to leave the house by the back-stair, in order to get as quickly as possible to the vessel. Little recked he of the interruption which was to be presented to his departure. He had got as far as the foot of the stair with his burden, when he was overtaken by a waiter, who declared that he was going to leave the house clandestinely without settling accounts. It is proper to mention that Mr Harvey had incurred the enmity of this particular waiter in consequence of having, out of his slender resources, given him too small a gratuity on the occasion of paying a former bill; and not aware of the second bill being settled, the waiter was rather glad to have an opportunity of charging him with a fraudulent design. In vain Mr Harvey remonstrated, saying he had paid for everything. The waiter would not believe his statement, and detained him till he should hear better about it.

'Let me go, fellow; I insist upon it,' said Mr Harvey, burning with indignation. 'I am already too late.'

'Not a step, till I ask master if accounts are squared.'

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At this moment, while the altercation was at the hottest, a terrible ringing of bells was heard, and above-stairs was a loud noise of voices, and of feet running to and fro. A chamber-maid came hurriedly down the stair, exclaiming that some one had stolen a gold watch from No. 17, and that nobody ought to leave the house till it was found. The landlord also, moved by the hurricane which had been raised, made his appearance at the spot where Harvey was interrupted in his exit.

'What on earth is all this noise about, John?' inquired the landlord of the waiter.

'Why, sir, I thought it rather strange for any gentleman to leave the house by the back way, carrying his own portmanteau, and so I was making a little breeze about it, fearing he had not paid his bill, when all of a sudden Sally rushes down the stair and says as how No. 17 has missed his gold watch, and that no one should quit the hotel.'

No. 17, an old, dry-looking military gentleman, in a particularly high passion, now shewed himself on the scene, uttering terrible threats of legal proceedings against the house for the loss he had sustained.

Harvey was stupefied and indignant, yet he could hardly help smiling at the pother. 'What,' said he, 'have I to do with all this? I have paid for everything; I am surely entitled to go away if I like. Remember, that if I lose my passage to Boston, you shall answer for it.'

'I very much regret detaining you, sir,' replied the keeper of the hotel; 'but you hear there has been a robbery committed within the last few minutes, and as it will be proper to search every one in the house, surely you, who are on the

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point of departure, will have no objections to be searched first, and then be at liberty to go?'

There was something so perfectly reasonable in all this, that Harvey stepped into an adjoining parlour, and threw open his trunk for inspection, never doubting that his innocence would be immediately manifest.

The waiter, whose mean rapacity had been the cause of the detention, acted as examiner. He pulled one article after another out of the trunk, and at length—horror of horrors!—held up the missing watch with a look of triumph and scorn!

'Who put that there?' cried Harvey in an agony of mind which can be better imagined than described. 'Who has done me this grievous wrong? I know nothing as to how the watch came into my trunk.'

No one answered this appeal. All present stood for a moment in gloomy silence.

'Sir,' said the landlord to Harvey on recovering from his surprise, 'I am sorry for you. For the sake of a miserable trifle, you have brought ruin and disgrace on yourself. This is a matter which concerns the honour of my house, and cannot stop here. However much it is against my feelings, you must go before a magistrate.'

'By all means,' added No. 17, with the importance of an injured man. 'A pretty thing that one's watch is not safe in a house like this!'

'John, send Boots for a constable,' said the landlord.

Harvey sat with his head leaning on his hand. A deadly cold perspiration trickled down his brow; his heart swelled and beat as if it would burst. What should he do? His whole prospects were in an instant blighted. 'O God! do not desert a frail and unhappy being: give me strength to

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face this new and terrible misfortune,' was a prayer he internally uttered. A little revived, he started to his feet, and addressing himself to the landlord, he said: 'Take me to a magistrate instantly, and let us have this diabolical plot unravelled. I court inquiry into my character and conduct.'

'It is no use saying any more about it,' answered the landlord; 'here is Boots with a constable, and let us all go away together to the nearest magistrate.—Boots, carry that trunk.—John and Sally, you can follow us.'

And so the party, trunk and all, under the constable as conductor, adjourned to the house of a magistrate in an adjacent street. There the matter seemed so clear a case of felony—robbery in a dwelling-house—that Harvey, all protestations to the contrary, was fully committed for trial at the ensuing March assizes, then but a few days distant.

At the period at which these incidents occurred, I was a young man going on my first circuits. I had not as yet been honoured with perhaps more than three or four briefs, and these only in cases so slightly productive of fees, that I was compelled to study economy in my excursions. Instead of taking up my residence at an inn when visiting ——, a considerable sea-port, where the court held its sittings, I dwelt in lodgings kept by a widow lady, where, at a small expense, I could enjoy perfect quietness, free from interruption.

On the evening after my arrival on the March circuit of the year 17—, I was sitting in my lodgings perusing a new work on criminal jurisprudence, when the landlady, after tapping at the door, entered my room.

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'I am sorry to trouble you, sir,' said she; 'but a lady has called to see you about a very distressing law-case—very distressing indeed, and a very strange case it is too. Only, if you could be so good as see her?'

'Who is she?'

'All I know about it is this: she is a Mrs Harvey. She and her husband and children were to sail yesterday for Boston. All were on board except the husband; and he, on leaving the large hotel over the way, was taken up for a robbery. Word was in the evening sent by the prisoner to his wife to come on shore with all her children and the luggage; and so she came back in the pilot-boat, and was in such a state of distress, that my brother, who is on the preventive service, and saw her land, took pity on her, and had her and her children and things taken to a lodging on the quay. As my brother knows that we have a London lawyer staying here, he has advised the poor woman to come and consult you about the case.'

'Well, I 'll see what can be done. Please desire the lady to step in.'

A lady was shortly shewn in. She had been pretty, and was so still, but anxiety was pictured in her pale countenance. Her dress was plain, but not inelegant; and altogether she had a neat and engaging appearance.

'Be so good as sit down,' said I, bowing; 'and tell me all you would like to say.'

The poor woman burst into tears; but afterwards recovering herself, she told me pretty nearly the whole of her history and that of her husband.

Lawyers have occasion to see so much duplicity, that I did not all at once give assent to the idea of Harvey being innocent of the crime of which he stood charged.

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'There is something perfectly inexplicable in the case,' I observed, 'and it would require sifting. Your husband, I hope, has always borne a good character?'

'Perfectly so. He was no doubt unfortunate in business; but he got his certificate on the first examination; and there are many who would testify to his uprightness.' And here again my client broke into tears, as if overwhelmed with her recollections and prospects.

'I think I recollect Mr Harvey's shop,' said I soothingly. 'It seemed a very respectable concern; and we must see what can be done. Keep up your spirits; the only fear I have arises from the fact of Judge A—— being on the bench. He is usually considered severe, and if exculpatory evidence fail, your husband may run the risk of being—transported.' A word of more terrific import, with which I was about to conclude, stuck unuttered in my throat. 'Have you employed an attorney?' I added.

'No; I have done nothing as yet, but apply to you, to beg of you to be my husband's counsel.'

'Well, that must be looked to. I shall speak to a local agent, to prepare and work out the case; and we shall all do our utmost to get an acquittal. To-morrow I will call on your husband in prison.'

Many thanks were offered by the unfortunate lady, and she withdrew.

I am not going to inflict on the reader a detailed account of this remarkable trial, which turned, as barristers would say, on a beautiful point of circumstantial evidence. Along with the attorney, a sharp enough person in his way, I examined various parties at the hotel, and made myself acquainted with the nature of the premises. The more we investigated, however, the more dark and mysterious—

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always supposing Harvey's innocence—did the whole case appear. There was not one redeeming trait in the affair, except Harvey's previous good character; and good character, by the law of England, goes for nothing in opposition to facts proved to the satisfaction of a jury. It was likewise most unfortunate that A—— was to be the presiding judge. This man possessed great forensic acquirements, and was of spotless private character; but, like the majority of lawyers of that day—when it was no extraordinary thing to hang twenty men in a morning at Newgate—he was a stanch stickler for the gallows as the only effectual reformer and safeguard of the social state. At this time he was but partially recovered from a long and severe indisposition, and the traces of recent suffering were distinctly apparent on his pale and passionless features.

Harvey was arraigned in due form; the evidence was gone carefully through; and everything, so far as I was concerned, was done that man could do. But at the time to which I refer, counsel was not allowed to address the court on behalf of the prisoner—a practice since introduced from Scotland—and consequently I was allowed no opportunity to draw the attention of the jury to the total want of any direct evidence of the prisoner's guilt. Harvey himself tried to point out the unlikelihood of his being guilty; but he was not a man gifted with dialectic qualities, and his harangue fell pointless on the understandings of the twelve common-place individuals who sat in the jury-box. The judge finally proceeded to sum the evidence, and this he did emphatically *against* the prisoner—dwelling with much force on the suspicious circumstance of a needy man taking up his abode at an expensive fashionable hotel; his furtive descent from his apartments by the back-stairs; the

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undoubted fact of the watch being found in his trunk; the improbability of any one putting it there but himself; and the extreme likelihood that the robbery was effected in a few moments of time by the culprit, just as he passed from the bar of the hotel to the room which he had occupied. 'If,' said he to the jury, in concluding his address, 'you can, after all these circumstances, believe the prisoner to be innocent of the crime laid to his charge, it is more than I can do. The thing seems to me as clear as the sun at noonday. The evidence, in short, is irresistible; and if the just and necessary provisions of the law are not enforced in such very plain cases, then society will be dissolved, and security for property there will be none. Gentlemen, retire and make up your verdict.'

The jury were not disposed to retire. After communing a few minutes together, one of them stood up and delivered the verdict: it was *Guilty!* The judge assumed the crowning badge of the judicial potentate—the black cap; and the clerk of arraigns asked the prisoner at the bar, in the usual form, if he had anything to urge why sentence of death should not be passed upon him.

Poor Harvey! I durst scarcely look at him. As the sonorous words fell on his ear, he was grasping nervously with shaking hands at the front of the dock. He appeared stunned, bewildered, as a man but half-awakened from a hideous dream might be supposed to look. He had comprehended, though he had scarcely heard, the verdict; for on the instant, the voice which but a few years before sang to him by the brook-side, was ringing through his brain, and he could recognise the little pattering feet of his children, as, sobbing and clinging to their shrieking mother's dress, she and they were hurried out of court. The clerk,

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after a painful pause, repeated the solemn formula. By a strong effort the doomed man mastered his agitation; his pale countenance lighted up with indignant fire, and firm and self-possessed, he thus replied to the fearful interrogatory:

'Much could I say in the name, not of mercy, but of justice, why the sentence about to be passed on me should not be pronounced; but nothing, alas! that will avail me with you, pride-blinded ministers of death. You fashion to yourselves—out of your own vain conceits do you fashion—modes and instruments, by the aid of which you fondly imagine to invest yourselves with attributes which belong only to Omniscience; and now I warn you—and it is a voice from the tomb, in whose shadow I already stand, which addresses you—that you are about to commit a most cruel and deliberate murder.'

He paused, and the jury looked into each other's eyes for the courage they could not find in their own hearts. The voice of conscience spoke, but was only for a few moments audible. The suggestions that what grave parliaments, learned judges, and all classes of 'respectability' sanctioned, could not be wrong, much less murderous or cruel, silenced the 'still, small' tones, and tranquillised the startled jurors.

'Prisoner at the bar,' said the judge with his cold, calm voice of destiny, 'I cannot listen to such observations: you have been found guilty of a heinous offence by a jury of your countrymen after a patient trial. With that finding I need scarcely say I entirely agree. I am as satisfied of your guilt as if I had seen you commit the act with my own bodily eyes. The circumstance of your being a person who, from habits and education, should have been above

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committing so base a crime, only aggravates your guilt. However, no matter who or what you have been, you must expiate your offence on the scaffold. The law has very properly, for the safety of society, decreed the punishment of death for such crimes: our only and plain duty is to execute that law.'

The prisoner did not reply: he was leaning with his elbows on the front of the dock, his bowed face covered with his outspread hands; and the judge passed sentence of death in the accustomed form. The court then rose, and a turnkey placed his hand upon the prisoner's arm, to lead him away. Suddenly he uncovered his face, drew himself up to his full height—he was a remarkably tall man—and glared fiercely round upon the audience, like a wild animal at bay. 'My lord,' he cried, or rather shouted, in an excited voice. The judge motioned impatiently to the jailer, and strong hands impelled the prisoner from the front of the dock. Bursting from them, he again sprang forward, and his arms outstretched, whilst his glittering eye seemed to hold the judge spell-bound, exclaimed: 'My lord, before another month has passed away, *you* will appear at the bar of another world, to answer for the life, the innocent life, which God bestowed upon me, but which you have impiously cast away as a thing of naught and scorn!' He ceased, and was at once borne off. The court, in some confusion, hastily departed. It was thought at the time that the judge's evidently failing health had suggested the prophecy to the prisoner. It only excited a few days' wonder, and was forgotten.

The position of a barrister in such circumstances is always painful. I need hardly say that my own feelings were of a very distressing kind. Conscious that if the unfortunate

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man really was guilty, he was at least not deserving of capital punishment, I exerted myself to procure a reprieve. In the first place I waited privately on the judge; but he would listen to no proposal for a respite. Along with a number of individuals—chiefly of the Society of Friends—I petitioned the crown for a commutation of the sentence. But being unaccompanied with a recommendation from the judge, the prayer of our petition was of course disregarded: the law, it was said, must take its course. How much cruelty has been exercised under shelter of that remorseless expression!

I would willingly pass over the succeeding events. Unable to save his life, I endeavoured to soothe the few remaining hours of the doomed convict, and frequently visited him in the condemned cell. The more I saw of him, the deeper grew my sympathy in his case, which was that of no vulgar felon. 'I have been a most unfortunate man,' said he one day to me. 'A destiny towards ruin in fortune and in life has pursued me. I feel as if deserted by God and man; yet I know, or at least would persuade myself, that Heaven will one day vindicate my innocence of this foul charge. To think of being hanged like a dog for a crime at which my soul revolts! Great is the crime of those imbecile jurors, and that false and hard-hearted judge, who thus, by an irreversible decree, consign a fellow-mortal to a death of violence and disgrace. O God, help me—help me to sustain that bitter, bitter hour!' And then the poor man would throw himself on his bed and weep.

But the parting with his wife and children: what pen can describe that terrible interview! They knelt in prayer, their woe-begone countenances suffused in tears, and with hands clasped convulsively together. The scene was too

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harrowing and sacred for the eye of a stranger. I rushed from the cell, and buried myself in my lodgings, whence I did not remove till all was over. Next day, James Harvey, a victim of circumstantial evidence and of a barbarous criminal code, perished on the scaffold.

Three weeks afterwards, the court arrived at a populous city in the west of England. It had in the interval visited another assize town, and there Judge A—— had left three for execution. At the trials of these men, however, I had not attended. So shocked had been my feelings with the mournful event which had taken place at ——, that I had gone into Wales for the sake of change of scene. After roaming about for a fortnight amidst the wild solitudes of Caernarvonshire, I took the stage for the city which I knew the court was to visit, and arrived on the day previous to the opening of the assizes.

'Well, are we to have a heavy calendar?' I inquired next morning of a brother-barrister on entering the court.

'Rather light for a March assize,' replied the impatient counsel as he bustled onward. 'There's Cartwright's case —highway robbery—in which I am for the prosecution. He'll swing for it, and perhaps four or five others.'

'A good hanging judge is A——,' said the under-sheriff, who at this moment joined us, rubbing his hands, as if pleased with the prospect of a few executions. 'No chance of the prophecy yonder coming to pass, I suppose?'

'Not in the least,' replied the bustling counsel. 'He never looked better. His illness has gone completely off. And this day's work will brighten him up.'

Cartwright's trial came on. I had never seen the man before, and was not aware that this was the same person

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whom Harvey had incidentally told me he had discharged for theft; the truth being, that till the last moment of his existence, that unfortunate man had not known how much he had been a sacrifice to this wretch's malice.

The crime of which the villain now stood accused was that of robbing a farmer of the paltry sum of eight shillings, in the neighbourhood of Ilfracombe. He pleaded not guilty, but put in no defence. A verdict was recorded against him, and in due form A—— sentenced him to be hanged. An expression of fiendish malignancy gleamed over the haggard features of the felon, as he asked leave to address a few words to the court. It was granted. Leaning forward, and raising his heavy scowling eyes to the judge, he thus began: 'There is something on my mind, my lord—a dreadful crime—which, as I am to die for the eight shillings I took from the farmer, I may as well confess. You may remember Harvey, my lord, whom you hanged the other day at ——?'

'What of him, fellow?' replied the judge, his features suddenly flushing crimson.

'Why, my lord, only this—that he was as innocent of the crime for which you hanged him as the child yet unborn! *I* did the deed! *I* put the watch in his trunk!' And to the unutterable horror of the entire court, he related the whole particulars of the transaction, the origin of his grudge against Harvey, and his delight on bringing him to the gallows.

'Inhuman, execrable villain!' gasped the judge in extreme excitement.

'Cleverly done, though! Was it not, my lord?' rejoined the ruffian with bitter irony. 'The evidence, you know, was irresistible; the crime as clear as the sun at noonday; and

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if, in such plain cases, the *just* and necessary law was not enforced, society would be dissolved, and there would be no security for property! These were your words, I think. How on that occasion I admired your lordship's judgment and eloquence! Society would be dissolved if an innocent man were not hanged! Ha! ha! ha! Capital! capital!' shouted the ferocious felon with demoniac glee, as he marked the effect of his words on the countenance of the judge.

'Remove the prisoner!' cried the sheriff. An officer was about to do so; but the judge motioned him to desist. His lordship's features worked convulsively. He seemed striving to speak, but the words would not come.

'I suppose, my lord,' continued Cartwright in low and hissing tones, as the shadow of unutterable despair grew and settled on his face—'I suppose you know that his wife destroyed herself. The coroner's jury said she had fallen accidentally into the water. *I* know better. She drowned herself under the agonies of a broken heart! I saw her corpse, with the dead baby in its arms; and then I felt, knew that I was lost!—lost! doomed to everlasting perdition! But, my lord'—and here the wretch broke into a howl wild and terrific—'*we* shall go down together—down to where your deserts are known. A-h-h! that pinches you, does it? Hound of a judge! legal murderer! coward! I spurn and spit upon thee!' The rest of the appalling objurgation was inarticulate, as the monster, foaming and sputtering, was dragged by an officer from the dock.

Judge A—— had fallen forward on his face, fainting and speechless with the violence of his emotions. The black cap had dropped from his brow. His hands were stretched out across the bench, and various members of the

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bar rushed to his assistance. The court broke up in frightful commotion.

Two days afterwards the county paper had the following announcement:

'Died at the Royal Hotel, ——, on the 27th instant, Judge A——, from an access of fever supervening upon a disorder from which he had imperfectly recovered.'

The prophecy was fulfilled!

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THE WEST INDIAN PLANTER:

A SKETCH FROM LIFE.

In taking a view of our own misfortunes, or of those of our neighbours, we are too apt to attribute to ill-luck that which is only the natural consequence of the sufferer's own failings. Extravagance, carelessness, weakness of character and purpose, perhaps an accidental oversight, ignorance of the world, or a want of that prudence which should prevent us from too hastily embarking in enterprises for which we are not prepared either by study or experience—one or all of these may generally be found at the bottom of every failure, if we do but give ourselves the time to examine.

A remarkable instance of this came under my notice during my residence in the West Indies. So invariably unsuccessful was my subject throughout all his undertakings, that he acquired the name of 'The Bewitched;' and the more simple inhabitants, considering his misfortunes as brought about by supernatural agency, did not even scruple

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to insinuate that he must have first made, and afterwards broken, a compact with the Evil One, who, for revenge, had set a blight upon everything he touched. Yet few individuals have ever started in life under circumstances more favourable to success than Fred Hamilton. Adopted by a bachelor uncle, who had been nominated to the governorship of the island in which I resided, in the days of highest colonial prosperity, he was called upon to act as secretary at the early age of sixteen. His education was defective; but for the colonies, this was of little importance while other qualifications existed; and our hero was persevering, adventurous, industrious, and saving even to parsimony, while the steadiness of his character was proverbial. He was not twenty when he thought he had laid by sufficient to embark as planter; and it just happened about this time that there was a fine plantation for sale, whose owner had returned to England with an immense fortune; and so rich was the soil, so well cultivated and well managed, that it was reported to yield from 50 to 100 per cent. The estate itself was invested with a great deal of romance and interest in the eyes of the inhabitants. It had been first planted by a certain Count Lopinot, a refugee from St Domingo, who would have been sacrificed during the rebellion but for the fidelity of his own domestics, who not only saved him from the fury of the insurgents, but followed him to this colony, there to continue as his slaves, and labour for his fortune. Count Lopinot, when he died, might at least have left the gift of freedom in his will to his generous deliverers; but such notions never occur to planters, or, when they do, they soon give place to a weightier consideration for their heirs; and thus no other token of acknowledgment was ever given to these devoted

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negroes than in naming the estate, which the count called 'La Reconnaissance,' in remembrance of what he owed them. The negroes who survived him preserved a strong attachment to his memory. He had been invariably kind and indulgent to them, sharing in their labour, their hardships, and their fare; and the contrast he formed to the hard-tasking, unfeeling owner who succeeded him, only made them cling with greater fondness to his name. The old ones left his memory as an heirloom to the young; the new generation grew up with his name on their lips; and every year, on the anniversary of his death, the negroes would assemble with their children on his grave; and at sundown, the hour of his burial, they would sing the wild chorus of grief, and fling garlands of flowers on the spot where he slept.

It was of this estate Fred now became purchaser, having agreed to pay half the value down, and the rest in yearly instalments. He was delighted with his acquisition, which presented at crop-time a scene of stirring interest: bands of young men and girls coming in to the mill laden with canes, and laughing with joy; groups of women watching and directing the process of grinding; and round about the caldrons, in the boiling-house, intelligent negroes, all busy and active in the manufacture, and cheering one another with their wild chorus songs, their stories, and their jokes. All went on well for a short time; the negroes were laborious and faithful, the estate well stocked, and sugar so profitable in the market, that Fred looked forward to a return which would not only pay off the first instalment of the debt incurred by the purchase, but be sufficient to realise a handsome surplus beside. As he was indulging in these reflections, planning his future movements, and picturing

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to himself a brilliant fortune, home intelligence arrived announcing a fall in the sugar-market so great, that not enough could be realised to meet the debt of the estate. Fred was startled, but not discouraged, for he had not been wholly unprepared for the fluctuations of the West India market, which at times were so great as to give to planting something of the character of gambling. Yet an error had been committed in the time chosen for the speculation—an error which wiser heads than his commit, when in their commercial adventures they take not into consideration the onward march of social and political changes, and their necessary influence on the private affairs of men. The question of the emancipation of the slaves, so often discussed, and so often set aside, was at last beginning to gain ground in England. But the colonists would not believe this, though they saw the markets steadily suffering; and our hero had been as obstinately blind to the fact as the rest when he had ventured as a slave-holding planter.

His first difficulty had come upon him, and the fall in the sugar-market was afterwards related as a fatality connected with him, particularly when it was remembered that, to add to his perplexities, Sir James —— now suddenly fell ill, and died a victim to the effects of the climate. This was a terrible blow to the young colonist, who lost in his uncle not only his best friend, but all hope of future favour with the men of power in England. Even the fortune he was led to expect was found legacied to poor relatives, Fred being considered too favourably embarked in life to need more than a family keepsake. To add to his mortification, he soon had to resign to another governor not only the government villa he had been accustomed to inhabit, but

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to a young successor the office of secretary, which had hitherto given him dignity and income.

Thus circumstanced, Fred prudently resolved to go down to live among his slaves on the estate. His first care was to reduce the expenditure: he dismissed his manager, and in his place worked early and late, in order to turn everything to profit, and prevent unnecessary waste. With this, he was prudent enough never to lose sight of the physical welfare of his negroes; and I even remember meeting him in a shop about this time clad, as I thought, very shabbily, while he was purchasing good warm clothing for his slaves. But neither economy nor good management could prevail against the commercial depression of the times. The markets became worse and worse; all West India produce was now at a discount; and the price of sugar continued steadily to sink, till the planters, alarmed and disconcerted, and being unable any longer to bear the expenses of a manufacture at all times very heavy, tore up their canes, and laid out their lands for other produce.

Fred alone bore the pressure with patience, believing that sugar was too long down not to rise at last. He still struggled on through his difficulties to maintain the expense of sugar-planting. By way of helping himself to do so, he resolved to embark what money he had on hand in some channel of profit; and finding a great demand in the market for cattle, an epidemic having swept the island of domestic animals, he took the opportunity, when a ship was about to sail for the coast of Africa, to order a cargo of bisons from the banks of the Senegal. In a few weeks the ship returned; and so eagerly were the animals sought by purchasers, that it was calculated Fred Hamilton might have made upwards of L.2000 profit that morning had he been

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disposed to come to terms; but after some bargaining, he postponed the sale, and sent his bisons away to the savannahs to be refreshed by green food, thinking that it would improve their appearance, and thus enable him to derive a greater profit from them. And it really seemed to turn out as he expected; the few he had sold to form samples of butcher-meat had been so much approved (the hump on the back had been found particularly tender), that many customers shewed signs of meeting the extravagant demands of the young speculator, and volunteered to follow him to the place where the animals were grazing. But a very different scene to that which they expected now met their view. Full twenty head of cattle were lying dead on the ground, all swollen and disfigured, from the effects of poison, while those which remained alive were drooping and dying. Was it the deed of some hidden enemy—some revengeful slave? No; but Fred Hamilton, in sending the animals to the savannahs, had never paused to consider their physical circumstances. Pent up and starved during the voyage, and proportionably eager to satisfy their hunger when the means were at hand, they had lost that instinct which should have taught them to distinguish between different herbs, and consequently had fallen victims to the poisonous weeds with which the new soil abounded.

The next speculation in which we find our hero engaged is matrimony; for he now considered the possession of an heiress the fairest and easiest way of rising out of his increasing difficulties.

Nora Grantley was at this time decidedly the belle of the colony. But her large lustrous eyes and fringing lashes, and her rich brown locks inframing a complexion fair as the rose, were not her only charms; she had a mind simple

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as it was accomplished, and a heart warm as youth, innocence, and native goodness could make it. Better than all, in the eyes of our colonist, she had a fortune, the amount of which was perfectly well known to Fred, as it was lodged in his brother's bank in England. It was precisely what he wanted—not investments of any kind, but hard cash at the disposal of the lady herself. Fred became painfully impatient to seize a prize apparently within his reach; and with anxious steps he hastened to make acquaintance with Major Grantley, the father of the young lady. Nora proved agreeable to the suit, the father encouraged it, and Fred was at length received as an acknowledged suitor. It had been well for Nora, however, had Fred never thought of her.

From the time of his uncle's death, Fred had become careless and imprudent in the choice of his companions, merely from a love of that flattery which, in the days of his uncle's power, had been profusely offered to him, and which he could no longer obtain but from those of a lower grade. Among the sycophants and parasites who were always about him, there was none so distinguished as George Morven—a young man of indifferent character, but possessing the seductive qualities of wit and a handsome person. He had missed Fred of late in their joyous haunts, and determined to learn the cause; he set off for La Reconnaissance, and soon overtook his friend, bent on the same journey. They spent the night in revelling; and when morning came, the negroes found the two gentlemen asleep in the open air, in a state which plainly told of their excesses. Now, the dew, or, as some have it, the moonlight, of tropical climates has generally a fatal effect upon those who sleep exposed to its influence, and Fred

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awoke ill, and with the muscles of his face drawn completely awry. In the delirium of fever, he raved continually about Nora, and about a little antelope brought to him by the captain of the bison cargo, and which, it seemed, during his last interview with Nora, he had promised to present to her next day. Morven, who, to do him justice, nursed his friend during his illness with brotherly care, renewed the conversation one day when he found the patient recovering, and offered to take the little creature to town with intelligence of his health to the lady, shrewdly remarking that it would keep him fresh in her memory. This offer was readily accepted, and many a message went and came from that day between Major Grantley's domicile and La Reconnaissance, until George Morven professed himself obliged to leave him to see after some affairs of his own in town. Being now left alone, Fred scarcely waited for the doctor's leave when he mounted his horse, and rode to town to see his Nora. The evening was bright and beautiful, and the road was lined with gay and fragrant blossoms; glittering birds twittered merrily on the boughs; and broad-winged butterflies were robbing the bells of the cactus, or sporting unconcernedly along, now alighting on the horse's neck, now dancing before our traveller's steps, as in joyous token of his coming bliss. Yielding to the pleasing influence, Fred mused on his future destiny, and the object which was to brighten it; and recollecting the taste which Nora had for binding her tresses with wild-grown wreaths, he tore from the palms the blooming garlands which twine about their trunks, and quickening his pace, arrived soon after at Major Grantley's by the court-yard gate, as it was customary with visitors riding. The first object he noticed was the antelope, which came

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bounding towards him, presenting her slender neck for the garlands which her master flung about her. Followed by the little favourite, he entered the house: but where was Nora? Alas, the place was desolate! Not a creature was to be seen, save one female domestic, who was standing at the door looking mournfully down the street. It was from this poor negro woman that Fred now learned the cause of the desolation around. Nora, the idol of so many, the good, the beautiful, the accomplished, had eloped with Morven, and the old major had left the house distracted to seek his child.

Some years afterwards, I chanced to see Nora. Alas, how changed! She, the hard-working drudge, by turns cooking a scanty meal for her drunken husband, and scouring the floor, I could scarcely at first believe her to be the same with the beautiful heiress, reared with such lavish affection and tenderness! Her father? Alas! he had long sunk into the grave: and her fortune—it was gone! But to return to the disappointed lover. He, it is said, was so overpowered at the unexpected account, that he fell senseless on the floor. Much pity cannot in justice be accorded to him. A true lover would not have become a night-reveller; a true lover would have shrunk from trusting to the mediation of an unprincipled boon-companion. A suitor from unworthy motives, he only met his proper reward. The unhappy Frederick suffered a relapse from excess of grief; but he was soon abroad again, and actively looking about for some other means of improving his fortune. Indeed, it was eminently required. The sugar had sunk more and more with every season; the planters no longer gave way to alarm; they were past that—they desponded; and Fred was fain at last to follow the general

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example, by rooting up the canes, to give place to some other produce. He now divided his estate between the planting of coffee and cocoa, at that time the two most profitable articles in the West India market; and so well did he manage, that it was not long before the precious plants began to flourish. But alas for his expectations, which had still outlived the signal failures of the past! One morning during his rambles among the cocoa-walks, to his dismay he discovered all the buds to be devoured by caterpillars of an enormous size, which swarmed in such extraordinary numbers as even to amaze the negroes themselves, accustomed as they are to tropical plagues. The coffee, too, was a failure; shrivelled and imperfect, the berries proved all valueless.

Amazed at a calamity which, of all the planters of that quarter, seemed to touch him alone, our colonist began to consider himself as the victim of his own negroes. He assembled them forthwith, examined them, accused them of dealing in Obeah magic, and punished them as though he had proved the crime. Yet what, in reality, was the cause? He had changed the cultivation of his estate from a kind which his negroes understood, to one of which both master and slaves were equally ignorant. From false notions of economy, he had not even allowed himself the assistance of a manager; and when the season came for clearing the leaves of insects, the cocoa-bushes were ignorantly neglected, and consequently devoured before the time of harvest came round. As for the coffee, its cultivation proved a failure, because the site of La Reconnaissance was by no means adapted for its growth; a circumstance which Fred Hamilton had entirely overlooked. Thus still was misfortune traceable to some deficiency on his own part.

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Having little to occupy him for a time, Fred began to collect all the fallen timber on the estate, which he was so far successful in selling, that the proceeds enabled him to embark in a speculation of another kind. He purchased a piece of land just outside the town, on the borders of a pleasant savannah, where the broad tufts of the bamboo and sheltering cinnamon make the air cool and fragrant. On this he erected a villa. The house was handsome, the garden, too, was charming. It had a Grenadilla arbour, patches of Spanish rose, and shrubs of the much-prized Irish brier, which scents the air with its leaves, though it refuses to bloom in the tropics. Then mimosas in abundance, trumpet and wax flowers, and a hundred others which he took care to introduce, to say nothing of a precious corner laid out for European vegetables, and which alone was enough to make the place desirable. He was not long in meeting with an advantageous offer for its purchase; and he was about to close the agreement, when a claimant most unexpectedly started up to dispute the title, which Fred had unfortunately neglected duly to examine. As matters stood, he might even then have extricated himself from the dilemma, had he listened to the counsels of a friend, who advised him to compound, and submit the matter to private arbitration, rather than engage in a suit; but Fred was tenacious, and would not yield an iota of what he held. So did the suit begin; and it may be pending yet for anything I know.

To meet the demands of the men of law, Fred found himself obliged to sell some of his negroes. He perceived with satisfaction that the slave-market was rising. There happened to be in the harbour a ship recently arrived from Barbadoes with a cargo of slaves smuggled from that island;

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and Fred, calculating on the favour which the government officers were testifying to the captain, ventured on the purchase of a lot, which he intended to take down to the estate, feed into proper plight, and sell again at a profit. And so far he had succeeded in his plans, that they were already trained and managed to excellent condition for the market, when one morning, as he sat calculating his probable gains on their sale, a strange negro entered his hall and presented him a paper, an official despatch, proclaiming the Barbadian cargo free.

How such an inconsistency could take place, can only be explained by that partial administration so usual in colonies far from the controlling power of the mother-country. The smuggling vessel had not only been allowed to enter the harbour unopposed, but the custom-house officers had passed the cargo, the registrar had entered the names of the negroes in his record, and even the protector of slaves had given the necessary license for their sale. But a private quarrel having arisen soon after between the latter gentleman and one of the purchasers, for revenge, an inquiry was immediately instituted into the illegal proceedings of the late importation, in order that the protector's opponent should be summoned to pay the penalty of the offence. Suffice it to say, that more opposition was offered to the sentence than had been contemplated; public curiosity was roused, and the punishment intended only for one, was soon found necessary to extend to all those who had been engaged in the forbidden purchase. Remonstrance was vain—petitions were useless—the authorities had frowned; and even Fred, who hastened to town to solicit connivance, was forced to submit. Alas! he had bought those slaves on credit; his debts had already increased to

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such an amount that he began to despair in good earnest; and what was worse, with the loss of hope vanished much of that nice sense of honour and self-respect of which he had once enjoyed the reputation. Purchasers of the smuggled cargo attributed their losses to his unfortunate partnership in the concern, and reported their conviction to all the gossips of the place. His dealings were mistrusted, his rectitude questioned—nay, his very payments were looked upon with superstitious dislike. Women would sit in their balconies of a moonlight evening, and relate long tales of his quarrels with the Evil One—how his new house was haunted, his cattle poisoned, his possessions cursed; and it was even asserted that winged demons had been seen flitting about his head as he was riding home one night in the gloom. At last even poor Fred's friends began to shun him—the weak, because they could not rise superior to public opinion; and the selfish, because he no longer brought them interest or honour.

Forsaken by all, Fred Hamilton was glad to turn to one who, being a despised man, and of the outcast race of mulattoes, he judged would only be too glad to have the honour of befriending him, a white man. Sam Bruton, flattered by his notice, shewed himself willing to serve the planter; he lent him money in his distress, and daily transacted little matters to his advantage, which, owing to general prejudice, would otherwise have been neglected. Fred thought little of these things. Like all white people, he considered the coloured race born for his benefit, deeming it recompense enough to permit any service at their hands. And when he saw Bruton's sister, it was not love that drew his attention, but the hope of obtaining a female superintendent on the estate to tend the negro children,

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and visit the patients of the hospital. But Lolotte was beautiful: she had one of those houri-like southern faces which set one dreaming of Paradise. And modest she was withal, and humble in her demeanour, as became one of her rejected race. Hamilton became fascinated; and almost unconsciously he made use of expressions which gave the poor girl to suppose that she had conquered the prejudices of caste. The brother was frantic when he found he was only trifling with his sister's happiness.

It would have been easy to stop this annoyance in former days, when a white man might with impunity have inflicted Lynch-law on a refractory mulatto; but the times were altered now—things were in a state of transition; scarcely any one knew his ground. The mulattoes had grown arrogant through government favour; and the planters, too well aware of this, shrank from quarrels, which, in the issue, would only humble them before a race of people they had hitherto trampled upon with impunity. Fred, therefore, saw the expediency of temporising, and with well-feigned candour he shewed his books to the young coloured man, and explained the difficulty of his affairs. 'You see,' he said, 'I am on the brink of ruin—my only hope lies in the willingness of my relatives in England to help me; and you will understand the impolicy of displeasing them just at this moment by a marriage which they would never forgive: only wait a little till I can do it with impunity.' Bruton yielded, but he watched him night and day; and he soon found that Fred, whether disgusted with his own importunities, or advised by his friends, was actually negotiating for a commission in the army, and preparing for a final and clandestine departure from the island. I remember one evening taking a stroll in company with

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some friends to Bruton's hut to see Lolotte, now broken-hearted and forsaken; for the little family, so well conducted and knit together with affection, had excited universal interest even among the race whose privilege it was to despise them. We found Lolotte reclining on a couch, with a rosary on the back of a chair near her, and a prayer-book on the seat. Her cheeks were sunken and haggard; her complexion, once so soft and golden, was now of an ashy paleness; and her large eyes shone with a light almost unearthly. She was hardly able to speak from exhaustion; yet when we rose to depart, on one of our party casting her eyes upon the prayer-book with a smile of approval, she made an effort to whisper, while her eyes filled with tears: 'It was for him I was praying: should you see him, say that Lolotte forgives him, and poor Bruton too has promised to forbear.' She could say no more, and we hurried away, secretly rejoicing to feel that her sorrows would soon be at an end. Nor were we mistaken, for in a few days afterwards we caught a sight of Bruton passing our house clad in mourning. He was graver than usual; but his countenance was also calmer and more resigned. We knew then that it was all over; and a very little after, we heard of Fred as busily as ever engaged in studying tropical agriculture, from which we judged that he had given up his commission, and had once more settled down to his wonted interest and occupations on the estate.

Bruton, in the meantime, had not forgotten his sister's wrongs, and in his desire for revenge, had been plotting the final ruin of her destroyer. Aware of the state of Fred Hamilton's affairs, he had written a full account of them to Coleman, former proprietor of La Reconnaissance, and principal creditor of its present owner, than which a more

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effectual means of sinking his enemy could not be devised. And now that the estate was thriving, our planter's experience telling, and the harvest really ripening, Coleman, who for some years past had been unable to obtain his due instalments, arrived to claim the estate in person. And to complete the last link of Fred's misfortunes, no sooner were the forms of seizure complied with, than the general emancipation of slaves was proclaimed; so that, after all, Fred had not even the right to claim a shilling of the compensation-money allowed to the slave-owners. The day on which he resigned La Reconnaissance, he borrowed a wagon to convey his movables to town, directing them to a hotel; while, with sorrow at his heart, he went by a by-path to take a last look at the estate. Strange that the same man who had but lately made such strenuous efforts to abandon the spot, should now feel such difficulty in summoning up resolution to leave it. He wandered up and down the walks he had planted like one in a dream, here pausing to contemplate the well-laden shrubs of cocoa, there turning to listen to the gurgling stream which watered them, or rushing senselessly through the tufts of Indian flag and tangled lianas which partly concealed the banks. So he continued till night came, and then he lay down beneath the tall coral trees and slept till next mid-day, when, by mere chance, one of the negro women of the estate found him still on the ground, and burning with fever. With the help of a companion whom she called to her assistance, she carried him to her hut, where, with that instinctive kindness characteristic of the African, she tended him night and day, placing all her little gains and possessions at his command. But the hand of sorrow had pressed too heavily on his head, misfortune after misfortune

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had crushed his spirit, and he looked at the future with despair. Thus without a friend, without a home, without a hope on earth, received for charity into the hut of one of his own negroes, did the nephew of his Excellency the Governor of ——, the brilliant secretary of 182–, the fortunate purchaser of La Reconnaissance, now at the age of twenty-eight, sink broken-hearted into the grave.

Alas! how many an adventurer has gone forth like him, full of ambition, elated with hope, impatient of gain, and ended as he did, without a friend to close his eyes! A mournful lesson to those who feel inclined to leave the slow certainty of home advancement to pursue the brilliant phantom of 'El Dorado!'

A too great love of gain, to the exclusion of every other thought and feeling, seems to have been our planter's defect. He might have succeeded in more settled countries; but here, the current of events was stronger than he could stem, and he had not genius to humour the stream till he could safely and conveniently swim to the shore.

As a relief to the melancholy catastrophe, we have pleasure in stating that those negroes who had been sold away from La Reconnaissance, sharing in the general boon of emancipation, were soon enabled to return to their old friends and relations; and we have since heard that many of them have even become small proprietors on that spot of land they had so richly deserved to inherit.

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ESTHER MASON.

ABOUT sixty years ago, Jabez Woodford, a foreman of shipwrights in the Plymouth dockyard, whilst carelessly crossing one of the transverse beams of a seventy-four gun-ship, building in that arsenal, missed his footing, fell to the bottom of the hold of the huge vessel, and was killed on the spot. He left a widow and one child—a boy seven years of age, of placid, endearing disposition, but weak intellect—almost in a state of destitution. He had been a coarse-tempered, improvident man; and like too many of his class, in those days at least, dissipated the whole of his large earnings in present sensuous indulgence, utterly careless or unmindful of the future. Esther Woodford, who, at the time of her husband's death, scarcely numbered five-and-twenty years, was still a remarkably comely, as well as interesting, gentle-mannered person; and moreover had, for her station in life, received a tolerable education. Her rash, ill-assorted marriage with Woodford had been hastily contracted when she was barely seventeen years of age, in consequence of a jealous pique which she, for some silly

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reason or other, had conceived regarding Henry Mason, an intelligent, young seafaring man, of fair prospects in life, and frank disposition, with whom she had for some time previously, as the west-country phrase has it, 'kept company,' and who was, moreover, tenderly attached to her. Esther's married life was one long repentance of the rash act; and the severance of the tie which bound her to an ungenial mate—after the subsidence of the natural horror and compassion excited by the sudden and frightful nature of the catastrophe—must have been felt as a most blessed relief. A few weeks afterwards, she accepted an asylum with her brother-in-law, Davies, a market-gardener in the vicinity of Plymouth, where, by persevering industry with her needle, and thrifty helpfulness in her sister's household duties, she endeavoured to compensate her kind-hearted relatives for the support of herself and helpless, half-witted child. Mason she had never seen since the day previous to her marriage; but she knew he was prospering in the busy world, and that, some time before her husband's death, he had been appointed chief-mate in a first-class merchant-ship trading to the Pacific. He had sailed about a fortnight previous to that event; and now, ten lazy months having slowly floated past, the lover of her youth, with whom, in that last sunny day of her young life—how distant did it seem, viewed through the long intervening vista of days and nights of grief and tears!—she had danced so joyously beneath the flowering chestnut trees, was once more near her; and it was—O happiness!—no longer a sin to think of him—no longer a crime to recall and dwell upon the numberless proofs of the deep affection, the strong love, he had once felt for her. *Once* felt! Perhaps even now——
How swiftly had the intelligence communicated by her

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sympathising sister tinted with bright hues the dark curtain of the future!

'And yet,' murmured poor Esther, the flush of hope fading as suddenly as it had arisen, as with meek sad eyes she glanced at the reflection of her features in the small oval glass suspended above the mantelpiece—'I almost doubt, Susy, dear, if he would recognise me; even if old feelings and old times have not long since faded from his memory'——

'Stuff and trumpery about fading away!' broke in Mrs Davies. 'Henry Mason is the same true-hearted man he was eight years ago; and as a proof that he is, just read this letter, which I promised him to give you.—There, don't go falling into a flustration; don't now, Esther, and to-morrow market-day and all! Don't cry, Esther,' she added vehemently, but at the same time sobbing furiously herself, and throwing her arms round her sister's neck: 'but perhaps—perhaps it will do us good, both of us!'

It may be necessary to state that I owe the foregoing particulars to the interest felt by my wife—herself a native of beautiful Devon—in the fortunes of this humble household. Esther was her foster-sister; and it happened that just at this period, it being vacation-time, we were paying a visit to a family in the neighbourhood. A few hours after the receipt of the welcome letter, my wife chanced to call on Esther relative to some fancy-needlework; and on her return, I was of course favoured with very full and florid details of this little bit of cottage romance; the which I, from regard to the reader, have carefully noted down, and as briefly as possible expressed.

We met Henry Mason with his recovered treasure on the following evening; and certainly a more favourable specimen

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of the vigorous, active, bold-featured, frank-spoken British seaman I never met with. To his comparatively excellent education—for which I understood he was indebted to his mother, a superior woman, who, having fallen from one of the little heights of society, had kept a school at Plymouth—in addition to his correct and temperate habits, he was indebted for the rapid advance—he was but a few months older than Esther—he had obtained in the merchant service. The happiness which beamed upon Esther's face did not appear to be of the exuberant, buoyant character that kindled the ruddy cheek and ran over at the bright, honest eyes of the hardy sailor: there seemed to mingle with it a half-doubting, trembling apprehensiveness; albeit it was not difficult to perceive that, sorrowfully as had passed her noon of prime, an 'Indian summer' of the soul was rising upon her brightened existence, and already with its first faint flushes lighting up her meek, doubting eyes, and pale, changing countenance. Willy, her feeble-minded child, frisked and gambolled by their side; and altogether, a happier group than they would, I fancy, have been difficult to find in all broad England.

The next week they were married; and one of the partners in the firm by which Mason was employed happening to dine with us on the day of the wedding, the conversation turned for a few minutes on the bridegroom's character and prospects.

'He has the ring of true metal in him,' I remarked; 'and is, I should suppose, a capital seaman?'

'A first-rate one,' replied Mr Roberts. 'Indeed, so high is my father's opinion of him, that he intends to confer upon him the command of a fine brig now building for us in the Thames, and intended for the West India trade. He

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possesses also singular courage and daring. Twice, under very hazardous circumstances, he has successfully risked his life to save men who had fallen overboard. He is altogether a skilful, gallant seaman.'

'Such a man,' observed another of the company, 'might surely have aspired higher than to the hand of Esther Woodford, dove-eyed and interesting as she may be?'

'Perhaps so,' returned Mr Roberts a little curtly; 'though he, it seems, could not have thought so. Indeed, it is chiefly of simple-hearted, chivalrous-minded men like Mason that it can be with general truth observed:

"On revient toujours à ses premiers amours."'

The subject then dropped, and it was a considerable time afterwards, and under altogether altered circumstances, when the newly married couple once more crossed my path in life.

It was about eight months after his marriage—though he had been profitably enough employed in the interim—that Henry Mason, in consequence of the welcome announcement that the new brig was at last ready for her captain and cargo, arrived in London to enter upon his new appointment.

'These lodgings, Esther,' said he, as he was preparing to go out, soon after breakfast, on the morning after his arrival, 'are scarcely the thing; and as I, like you, am a stranger in Cockney-land, I had better consult some of the firm upon the subject before we decide upon permanent ones. In the meantime, you and Willy must mind and keep indoors when I am not with you, or I shall have one or other of you lost in this great wilderness of a city. I shall return in two or three hours. I will order something for dinner

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as I go along: I have your purse. Good-bye: God bless you both.'

Inquiring his way every two or three minutes, Mason presently found himself in the vicinity of Tower Stairs. A scuffle in front of a public-house attracted his attention; and his ready sympathies were in an instant enlisted in behalf of a young sailor, vainly struggling in the grasp of several athletic men, and crying lustily on the gaping bystanders for help. Mason sprang forward, caught one of the assailants by the collar, and hurled him with some violence against the wall. A fierce outcry greeted this audacious interference with gentlemen who, in those good old times, were but executing the law in a remarkably good old manner. Lieutenant Donnagheu, a somewhat celebrated snapper-up of loose mariners, emerged upon the scene; and in a few minutes was enabled to exult in the secure possession of an additional prize in the unfortunate Henry Mason, who, too late, discovered that he had embroiled himself with a *press-gang!* Desperate, frenzied were the efforts he made to extricate himself from the peril in which he had rashly involved himself. In vain! His protestations that he was a mate, a captain, in the merchant service were unheeded or mocked at.

To all his remonstrances he only got the professional answer: 'His majesty wants you, and that is enough; so come along, and no more about it.'

Bruised, exhausted, almost mad, he was borne off in triumph to a boat, into which he was thrust with several others, and swiftly rowed off to a receiving-ship in the river. Even there his assertions and protestations were of no avail. Nothing but an Admiralty order, the officer in command candidly told him, should effect his liberation. His majesty

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was in need of seamen; and he was evidently too smart a one to be deprived of the glory of serving his country. 'You must therefore,' concluded the officer, as he turned laughingly upon his heel, 'do as thousands of other fine fellows have been compelled to do—"grin and bear it."' In about three weeks from the date of his impressment Mason found himself serving in the Mediterranean on board the *Active* frigate, Captain Alexander Gordon, without having been permitted one opportunity of communicating with the shore. This was certainly very sharp, but it was not the less very *common* practice in those great days of triumphant battles by land and sea.

Very drearily passed the time with the bereaved wife. Her husband had promised to send home something for dinner, and various groceries; yet hour after hour went past, and nothing arrived. Morning flushed into noon, day faded to twilight, and still the well-known and always eager step sounded not upon the stairs! What could have detained him from his wife, shut up, imprisoned, as it were, in that hot, hurrying, stifling city? She feared to listen to the suggestions of her boding heart; and with feverish restlessness ran out upon the landing, and peered over the stairs every time a knock or ring was heard at the street-door. This strange behaviour was, it seems, noticed by the landlady of the lodging-house, and injuriously interpreted. A knock came to the door, and that person entered to know at what time *Mrs*——, she had forgotten the young woman's name, expected the dinner, she, the landlady, had undertaken to cook.

Esther timidly replied that her husband had promised to return in two or three hours at latest; and that she did not comprehend his continued absence—was indeed quite alarmed about it——

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'Your husband!' said the woman, glancing insolently at Esther's figure. 'Are you sure he *is* your husband?'

The hot blood suffused the temples of the indignant wife as she said: 'This apartment, madam, I believe is mine?'

'Oh, certainly, as long as you can pay for it;' and rudely slamming the door, the landlady departed.

The long wretched night at last over, Esther rose with the light; and after giving her son his breakfast from the remains of that of the day before, set off with him to the place of business of the Messrs Roberts. It was early, and one clerk only had as yet arrived at the office. He informed her that Mr Henry Mason had not been seen, and that the partners were greatly annoyed about it, as his immediate presence was absolutely necessary.

Stunned, terrified, bewildered by the frightful calamity which she believed had befallen her, she felt convinced that her husband had been entrapped and murdered for the sake of the money he had about him: the wretched woman tottered back to her lodgings, and threw herself on the bed in wild despair. What was to be done for food even for her boy? Her husband had not only his pocket-book with him containing his larger money, but had taken her purse! She was alone and penniless in a strange city! The hungry wailings of her witless child towards evening at length aroused her from the stupor of despair into which she had fallen. The miserable resource of pawning occurred to her: she could at least, by pledging a part of her wardrobe, procure sustenance for her child till she could hear from her sister; and with trembling hands she began arranging a bundle of such things as she could best spare, when the landlady abruptly entered the room, with a peremptory demand—as her husband was not returned, and did not

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appear likely to do so—for a month's rent in advance, that being the term the apartments were engaged for. The tears, entreaties, expostulations of the miserable wife were of no avail. Not one article, the woman declared, should leave her house till her claim was settled. She affected to doubt, perhaps really did so, that Esther was married; and hinted coarsely at an enforcement of the laws against persons who had no visible means of subsistence. In a paroxysm of despair, the unhappy woman rushed out of the house; and accompanied by her hungry child, again sought the counting-house of the Messrs Roberts. She was now as much too late as she had been too early in the morning: the partners and clerks had gone, and she appears to have been treated with some rudeness by the porter, who was closing the premises when she arrived. Possibly the wildness of her looks, and the incoherence of her speech and manner, produced an impression unfavourable to her. Retracing her steps—penniless, hungry, sick at heart—she thought, as she afterwards declared, that she recognised my wife in one of the numerous ladies seated before the counters of a fashionable shop in one of the busiest thoroughfares. She entered, and not till she approached close to the lady discovered her mistake. She turned despairingly away; when a piece of rich lace, lying apparently unheeded on the counter, met her eye, and a dreadful suggestion crossed her fevered brain: here at least was the means of procuring food for her wailing child. She glanced hastily and fearfully round. No eye, she thought, observed her; and, horror of horrors! a moment afterwards she had concealed the lace beneath her shawl, and with tottering feet was hastily leaving the shop. She had not taken half-a-dozen steps when a heavy hand was laid upon her shoulder, and a voice, as of a serpent

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hissing in her ear, commanded her to restore the lace she had stolen. Transfixed with shame and terror, she stood rooted to the spot, and the lace fell on the floor.

'Fetch an officer,' said the harsh voice, addressing one of the shopmen.

'No—no—no!' screamed the wretched woman, falling on her knees in wild supplication. 'For my child's sake—in mercy of the innocent babe as yet unborn—pity and forgive me!'

The harsh order was iterated; and Esther Mason, fainting with shame and agony, was conveyed to the prison in Giltspur Street. The next day she was fully committed to Newgate on the capital charge of privately stealing in a shop to the value of five pounds. A few hours after her incarceration within those terrible walls, she was prematurely delivered of a female child.

I have no moral doubt whatever, I never have had, that at the time of the committal of the felonious act, the intellect of Esther Mason was disordered. Any other supposition is inconsistent with the whole tenor of her previous life and character. 'Lead us not into temptation' is indeed the holiest, because the humblest prayer.

Three weeks had elapsed before the first intimation of these events reached me, in a note from the chaplain of Newgate, an excellent, kind-hearted man, to whom Mrs Mason had confided her sad story. I immediately hastened to the prison; and in a long interview with her, elicited the foregoing statement. I readily assured her that all which legal skill could do to extricate her from the awful position in which she stood, the gravity of which I did not affect to conceal, should be done. The offence with which she was charged had supplied the scaffold with numberless

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victims; and tradesmen were more than ever clamorous for the stern execution of a law which, spite of experience, they still regarded as the only safeguard of their property. My wife was overwhelmed with grief; and in her anxiety to save her unhappy foster-sister, sought, without my knowledge, an interview with the prosecutor, in the hope of inducing him not to press the charge. Her efforts were unavailing. He had suffered much, he said, from such practices, and was 'upon principle' determined to make an example of every offender he could catch. As to the plea that the husband had been forcibly carried off by a press-gang, it was absurd; for what would become of the property of tradesmen if the wife of every sailor so entrapped were to be allowed to plunder shops with impunity? This magnificent reasoning was of course unanswerable; and the rebuked petitioner abandoned her bootless errand in despair. Messrs Roberts, I should have mentioned, had by some accident discovered the nature of the misfortune which had befallen their officer, and had already made urgent application to the Admiralty for his release.

The Old Bailey sessions did not come on for some time: I, however, took care to secure at once, as I did not myself practise in that court, the highest talent which its bar afforded. Willy, who had been placed in a workhouse by the authorities, we had properly taken care of till he could be restored to his mother; or, in the event of her conviction, to his relatives in Devonshire.

The sessions were at last on: a 'true bill' against Esther Mason for shop-lifting, as it was popularly termed, was unhesitatingly found, and with a heavy heart I wended my way to the court to watch the proceedings. A few minutes after I entered, Mr Justice Le Blanc and Mr Baron Wood,

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who had assisted at an important case of stock-jobbing conspiracy, just over, left the bench: the learned recorder being doubtless considered quite equal to the trial of a mere capital charge of theft.

The prisoner was placed in the dock; but try as I might, I could not look at her. It happened to be a calm bright summer day; the air, as if in mockery of those death-sessions, humming with busy, lusty life; so that, sitting with my back to the prisoner, I could, as it were, read her demeanour in the shadow thrown by her figure on the opposite sun-lighted wall. There she stood, during the brief moments which sealed her earthly doom, with downcast eyes and utterly dejected posture; her thin fingers playing mechanically with the flowers and sweet-scented herbs spread scantily before her. The trial was very brief: the evidence, emphatically conclusive, was confidently given, and vainly cross-examined. Nothing remained but an elaborate *ad misericordiam* excusative defence, which had been prepared by me, and which the prisoner begged her counsel might be allowed to read. This was of course refused; the recorder remarking, they might as well allow counsel for felons to *address* juries, as read defences; and *that*, as every practical man knew, would be utterly subversive of the due administration of justice. The clerk of the court would read the paper, if the prisoner felt too agitated to do so. This was done; and very vilely done. The clerk, I daresay, read as well as he was able; but old, near-sighted, and possessed of anything but a clear enunciation, what could be expected? The defence, so read, produced not the slightest effect either on the court or jury. The recorder briefly commented on the conclusiveness of the evidence for the prosecution; and the jury, in the

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same brief, business-like manner, returned a verdict of Guilty.

'What have you to say,' demanded the clerk, 'why sentence of death should not be pronounced upon you, according to law?'

The shadow started convulsively as the terrible words fell from the man's lips; and I saw that the suddenly upraised eyes of the prisoner were fastened on the face of the fearful questioner. The lips, too, appeared to move; but no sound reached my ears.

'Speak, woman,' said the recorder, 'if you have anything to urge before sentence is pronounced.'

I started up, and turning to the prisoner, besought her in hurried accents to speak. 'Remind them of the infant at your breast—your husband'——

'Who is that conferring with the prisoner?' demanded the judge in an angry voice.

I turned, and confronted him with a look as cold and haughty as his own. He did not think proper to pursue the inquiry further; and after muttering something about the necessity of not interrupting the proceedings of the court, again asked the prisoner if she had anything to urge.

'Not for myself—not for my sake,' at last faintly murmured the trembling woman; 'but for that of my poor dear infant—my poor witless boy! I do not think, sir, I was in my right mind. I was starving; I was friendless. My husband, too, whom you have heard'—— She stopped abruptly; a choking sob struggled in her throat; and but for the supporting arm of one of the turnkeys, she would have fallen to the ground.

'Unhappy, guilty woman,' said the recorder, with the coolness of a demon, 'the plea of insanity you would set up

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is utterly untenable. Your husband, it seems, is serving his majesty in the royal navy; defending his country, whilst his wife was breaking its laws, by the commission of a crime which, but for the stern repression of the law, would sap the foundations of the security of property, and '——

I could endure no more. The atmosphere of the court seemed to stifle me; and I rushed for relief into the open air. Before, however, I had reached the street, a long, piercing scream informed me that the learned judge *had done his duty.*

No effort was spared during the interval which elapsed previous to the recorder presenting his report to the privy-council—a peculiar privilege at that time attached to the office—to procure a mitigation of the sentence. A petition, setting forth the peculiar circumstances of the case, was carefully prepared; and by the indefatigable exertions of an excellent Quaker gentleman—whom, as he is still alive, and might not choose to have his name blazoned to the world, I will call William Friend—was soon very numerously signed. The prosecutor, however, obstinately refused to attach his name to the document; and the absence of his signature—so strangely did men reason on such matters in those days—would, it was feared, weigh heavily against the success of the petition. The amiable and enlightened Sir Samuel Romilly not only attached his name, but aided us zealously by his advice and influence. In short, nothing was omitted that appeared likely to attain the desired object.

Two days before the petition was to be forwarded to the proper quarter, Henry Mason arrived in England, the exertions of his employers having procured his discharge. The *Active* was one of Captain Hoste's squadron, which obtained the celebrated victory off Lissa, over the Franco-Venetian

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fleet commanded by Admiral Dobourdieu. Henry Mason, it appeared by the testimonials of the captain and officers of his ship, had greatly distinguished himself in the action. We enclosed these papers with the petition; and then, having done all in our power, awaited with anxious impatience the result of the recorder's report. It was announced to me, as I was sitting somewhat later than usual at chambers, by Mr William Friend. The judgment to die was confirmed! All our representations had not sufficed to counterbalance the supposed necessity of exhibiting terrible examples of the fate awaiting the perpetrators of an offence said to be greatly on the increase. Excellent William Friend wept like a child as he made the announcement.

There are many persons alive who recollect this horrible tragedy—this national disgrace—this act of gross barbarity on the part of the great personage, who, first having carried off the poor woman's husband, left her to die for an act the very consequence of that robbery. Who among the spectators can ever forget that heart-rending scene—the hangman taking the baby from the breast of the wretched creature just before he put her to death! But let us not rake up these terrible reminiscences. Let us hope that the *truly guilty* are forgiven. And let us take consolation from reflecting that this event led the great Romilly to enter on his celebrated career as a reformer of the criminal law.

The remains of Esther Mason were obtained from the Newgate officials, and quietly interred in St Sepulchre's churchyard. A plain slab, with her name only plainly chiselled upon it, was some time afterwards placed above the grave. A few years ago, I attended a funeral in the same graveyard; and after a slight search, discovered the

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spot. The inscription, though of course much worn, was still quite legible.

I had not seen Henry Mason since his return; but I was glad to hear from Mr William Friend that, after the first passionate burst of rage and grief had subsided, he had, apparently at least, thanks to the tender and pious expostulations of his wife—with whom, by the kind intervention of the sheriffs, he was permitted long and frequent interviews—settled down into calmness and resignation. One thing only he would not bear to hear even from her, and that was any admission that she had been guilty of even the slightest offence. A hint of the kind, however unintentional, would throw him into a paroxysm of fury; and the subject was consequently in his presence studiously avoided.

A few days after the execution, Mr William Friend called on me just after breakfast, accompanied by the bereaved husband. I never saw so changed a man. All the warm kindliness of his nature had vanished, and was replaced by a gloomy fierce austerity, altogether painful to contemplate.

'Well, sir,' said he, as he barely touched my proffered hand, 'they have killed her, you see, spite of all you could say or do. It much availed me, too, that I had helped to win their boasted victories;' and he laughed with savage bitterness.

'Henry—Henry!' exclaimed William Friend in a reproving accent.

'Well, well, sir,' rejoined Mason impatiently, 'you are a good man, and have of course your own notions on these matters: I also have mine. Or perhaps you think it is only the blood of the rich and great which, shed unjustly, brings forth the iron harvest? Forgive me,' he added, checking himself. 'I respect you both; but my heart is turned to

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stone. You do not know—none ever knew but I—how kind, how loving, how gentle was that poor long-suffering girl.'

He turned from us to hide the terrible agony which convulsed him.

'Henry,' said Mr Friend, taking him kindly by the hand, 'we pity thee sincerely, as thou knowest; but thy bitter, revengeful expressions are unchristian, sinful. The authorities whom thou, not for the first time, railest on so wildly, acted, be sure of it, from a sense of duty; a mistaken one, in my opinion, doubtless; still'——

'Say no more, sir,' interrupted Mason. 'We differ in opinion upon the subject. And now, gentlemen, farewell. I wished to see you, sir, before I left this country for ever, to thank you for your kind, though fruitless exertions. Mr Friend has promised to be steward for poor Willy of all I can remit for his use. Farewell. God bless you both!' He was gone!

War soon afterwards broke out with the United States of America, and Mr Friend discovered that one of the most active and daring officers in the Republican navy was Henry Mason, who had entered the American service in the maiden name of his wife; and that the large sums he had remitted from time to time for the use of Willy were the produce of his successful depredations on British commerce. The instant Mr Friend made the discovery, he refused to pollute his hands with moneys so obtained, and declined all further agency in the matter. Mason, however, contrived to remit through some other channel to the Davieses, with whom the boy had been placed; and a rapid improvement in their circumstances was soon visible. These remittances ceased about the middle of 1814; and a twelvemonth after the

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peace with America, we ascertained that Henry Mason had been killed in the battle on Lake Champlain, where he had distinguished himself, as everywhere else, by the reckless daring and furious hate with which he fought against the country which, in his unreasoning frenzy, he accused of the murder of his wife. He was recognised by one of his former messmates in the *Active;* who, conveyed a prisoner on board the American commander Macdonough's ship, recognised him as he lay stretched on the deck, in the uniform of an American naval officer; his countenance, even in death, wearing the same stormful defiant expression which it assumed on the day that his beloved Esther perished on the scaffold.

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SEBASTIAN LECLERC.

One fine midsummer morning, in the year 1665, the exciseman who had the care of the Porte St-Denis, one of the chief entrances to the city of Paris, was accosted by an aged man, who, with his long hair, bald forehead, and beard fashioned in the style of Henry IV.'s time, had a somewhat singular aspect. He courteously saluted the officer on guard, and inquired of him, in a strong Alsatian dialect: 'Can you tell me whereabouts Sebastian Leclerc lives?'

At this question, the exciseman, a stupid-looking ninny, opened his mouth wide, and stared with a bewildered look at his interrogator. 'Sebastian Leclerc?' he repeated. 'Is he a clerk of the Excise? I don't know any one of that name in our company.'

'A clerk of the Excise!' exclaimed the old man in a voice which insensibly betrayed somewhat of contempt for the office. 'Assuredly not. Sebastian Leclerc is my son.'

'In what quarter of the town does he reside?'

'If I knew it myself, I need not ask you!' replied the

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stranger, with the twofold susceptibility of an old man and a *provincial*.

The clerk burst into a fit of laughter, and called out to his companions, who were within the office: 'Hollo, there! Do any of you know Sebastian Leclerc, who lives in PARIS?'

'Sebastian Leclerc?'

'Yes; this old fellow is his father, and has been inquiring for him.'

One of the party, wishing to play off his wit on the stranger, put his hand to his forehead with an air of mock gravity, and said: 'He lives in the Rue St-Jacques.'

'Not so,' said another; 'near the convent of the Capucins.'

'*I* have an idea,' interrupted a third, 'that he lodges in the Faubourg St-Antoine.'

'On the Pont-Neuf.'

'On the towers of Notre-Dame.'

The traveller listened to all this foolish jesting with apparent calmness, and then gravely said: 'I cannot understand what pleasure you find in making game of an old man who has never before seen Paris, and is a stranger to its customs. It is very possible that my question may be ridiculous, but the respect due to my age might, methinks, have exempted me from your raillery. Here is a *bourgeois* listening to us. I have little doubt he will shew himself more courteous and better taught than you seem to be.'

As he thus spoke, he turned towards a man, apparently about forty years of age, who stood a few paces off, wrapped in his cloak, and silently observing the whole scene. 'My good man,' remarked the new-comer, 'Paris is not a town in which one can point out a person's abode without having some clue to his residence. What is your son's occupation? Possibly the knowledge of his profession might enable me

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to guess the quarter in which he would most probably reside.'

'Sir,' replied the old man, 'my son is employed as a designer in the Royal Manufactory of Gobelins.'

'In that case, there can be no difficulty in finding him, for he must be an inmate of the factory itself.—You see,' said he, turning to the exciseman, 'if, instead of passing your jokes upon this old man, you had asked him the same question I have done, you would have been able at once to give him the information he required.'

The clerk looked insolently at the person who thus addressed him, and taking him by the shoulder, said: 'Perhaps you have a mind to try what kind of place a prison is, sir; you seem so well inclined to preach your homilies to the clerks of Excise.'

'Hold your tongue, and prepare yourself to obey my orders.'

'Capital! this *is* being grand indeed!—Hollo! comrades, come here all of you, hat in hand, to receive the orders of a citizen who is about to issue his commands to the officers of Excise.'

'Silence! if you please. Conduct this old man directly to the Gobelins, and do not quit him till he has found his son.'

'Well, this is better still! Do your commissions yourself, if you please, my good sir.'

The stranger turned towards another of the clerks, and desired him to call the supervisor. The tone in which he gave this order bespoke so much the habit of command, that the clerk obeyed directly. In a few moments the supervisor made his appearance. No sooner did he perceive the supposed bourgeois, than he respectfully took off his hat, and

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bowing almost to the ground, exclaimed: 'Monseigneur le Surintendant!'

'Sir,' said Colbert with a tone of severity, 'I had requested you and your colleagues to choose for the office of excisemen people who knew how to discharge their duties with gentleness and courtesy. How does it then happen that I find amongst them a fool who amuses himself at the expense of the passers-by?' The poor clerk looked terrified.

'I shall dismiss the man at once,' replied the head official.

'My lord,' interrupted the old man in a pleading tone, 'I would not for the world, merely on account of a joke, occasion the ruin of an honest man, who is perhaps the father of a family.'

'I pardon him, then, at your request,' replied the intendant: 'let him, however, make haste to obey my orders.'

The poor clerk, half-dead with fright, promptly seized the old man's knapsack, which he placed on his own shoulders, and only seemed anxious to start as quickly as possible.

'Wait a moment, my boy; I must thank monseigneur both for you and for myself; and I will also tell him a thing which may perhaps interest him.—Monseigneur, my name is Laurent Leclerc, and to-morrow I shall have completed my hundredth year! It was for the sake of celebrating this anniversary with my son that I set out on foot from the city of Metz, which is my home, and am now entering the streets of Paris.'

'Your hundredth year! You a hundred years old?' exclaimed Colbert.

'Yes, monseigneur; I contracted a second marriage when I was seventy years of age. God blessed this marriage, as he did that of Abraham, and he gave me a son, who has been my joy and pride. For the last ten years he has

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supported me by his labour, and given me a pension of four hundred livres, which he saves from his salary; and on this his mother and I live happily together. He cannot leave Paris because of his occupation and his family cares; and the other day he wrote to us, saying how it grieved him not to have the comfort of seeing and embracing us once more. "Come, wife," said I to Margaret, "*we* must set off and see *him;* we are both, thank God, hale and sound; and in the corner of the cupboard we have a little bag of silver which will pay your seat to Paris. I will start to-morrow; you, eight days hence; and we will all meet together, please God, at Paris, on the hundredth anniversary of my birth, and a happy day it will be!" Margaret joyfully acceded to my proposition. I set off with my knapsack on my back and my staff in my hand—and here I am, after my fifteen days' journey on foot, gay and fresh as when I started, and longing to embrace my son.'

'I thank you, my friend, for these details; they interest me deeply. I am a lover of good men and of dutiful sons. I hope to have it in my power to shew you that this rencontre has been a fortunate one for you. Farewell: to-morrow you shall receive my jubilee gift; in the meanwhile, will you favour me by accepting this trifle?' Thus saying, he slipped three gold pieces into the centagenarian's hand.

The old man and the clerk of Excise stepped into a hackney-coach, and in the space of half an hour they drove into the court-yard of the Gobelins factory.

It happened to be the hour when the artisans leave the manufactory to go to their dinner, each in his own little apartment in the interior of the establishment.

Suddenly one of their number uttered an exclamation of

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joy, and threw himself into the arms of the aged Leclerc. 'My father, can it be you? Is it indeed you yourself? Is it possible that, for the sake of giving me this happiness, of allowing me to embrace you once more, you have actually undertaken this long and fatiguing journey?'

'Long it *was*, but fatiguing it was *not*,' proudly replied his father. 'I no more feel fatigued by my fifteen days of travel, than I used to do at twenty after a long ramble. Come, my own good Sebastian, my dear son, let us have one more kiss, and then take me to see thy wife and children!'

While he was yet speaking, a second hackney-coach drove into the yard. It was the good Margaret, who had just arrived. When she saw her son and her husband clasped in each other's arms, she was almost overcome by her excess of happiness. Words cannot describe her sensations. She cried, she laughed, she threw her arms first around one, then around the other: it seemed as if she could never weary of embracing them. 'And are you, too, here, my mother?' said the young man: 'now, then, my happiness is indeed complete! the first and dearest wish of my heart is accomplished. I can at length see all whom I love united together around me.' He took his mother by the hand, drew his father's arm within his own, and led them both to a small lodge, where they found a young and pretty woman engaged in laying the cloth. Four children, the eldest of whom seemed about seven years of age, were assisting her in her domestic labours, whilst three still younger were gambolling joyously around her.

'Two covers more, dear Pauline—two covers more!' exclaimed Sebastian before they had reached the threshold.

At the well-known sound of this welcome voice, she hastened forward to meet him with her children around her;

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and her husband said in a voice tremulous with emotion: 'Here is my father, Pauline—here is my mother.'

The little children screamed with joy, and strove who should have the first kiss from grandpapa and grandmamma. Their young mother, following the pious usage of those days, knelt to receive the benediction of the aged couple.

Her children imitated her example, and knelt by her side. The aged man, laying his hands with solemnity upon their bended heads, said: 'My God, let thy blessing rest upon these little ones, and upon their mother. Preserve them from all evil under the shadow of thine Almighty wing; and keep them in thy holy ways, that we may all be united hereafter in heaven, as we are, praise be to thy name, to-day on earth.' 'Amen!' was echoed by every voice and from every heart in that little band.

'And now, my children, let us come to dinner. I must have my son at one side, and Pauline at the other; and you, my wife, shall sit at the other side of our Sebastian, and take care of the little children.'

I need not add that the repast was a joyous one; nor did the emotion they had experienced prevent any of the party from doing justice to the good dinner which Pauline had provided, for her talents as housekeeper were equal to her comeliness.

The happy party were on the point of rising from table, when the celebrated painter Lebrun, Director of the Royal Manufactory of Gobelins, entered with a paper in his hand. 'My dear Sebastian,' said he, 'I come to you as the bearer of good news. Monseigneur the Intendant of Finance has increased your salary from twelve hundred to two thousand francs a year; moreover, he has named you sub-director of the Royal Manufactory of Gobelins, an office which he has

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created expressly for you, on account of the favourable testimony which it has happily been in my power to bear both to your character and talents; and finally, in order that your father may not be obliged to return to Metz, he has obtained for him from his majesty a pension of six hundred livres, with reversion to your mother; and has also empowered me to provide them both with apartments in this establishment. Thus you will no longer be under the necessity of separating from them.'

'Thanks, sir—a thousand thanks!' exclaimed Sebastian.

'May God reward M. Colbert for this!' said the aged Laurent.

'Sebastian,' added Lebrun, when the young man was somewhat recovered from his emotion, 'you must profit by the bounty of his majesty and M. Colbert, by becoming a superior artist. Hitherto, poverty has prevented the free exercise of your talents; now, nothing can, nothing ought any longer to stand in the way of your entire success.'

'My noble benefactor,' warmly responded the young man, 'you need not fear but I will do all that in me lies to prove myself worthy of your kindness. The name of Sebastian Leclerc shall not be wholly lost to posterity.'

The young artist kept his word. Six years afterwards, he was known throughout Europe as the most able engraver of the day: the Royal Academy of Sciences received him with joy into her bosom; and he was made Professor of Perspective.

He afterwards became Professor of Design in the School of the Gobelins, and united to this title that of Engraver for the *Cabinet du Roi*. His aged father was spared yet seven years longer to witness the brilliant career of his son; but at length one day, whilst Sebastian Leclerc, surrounded by

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his children, his wife, and his parents, was conducting the evening devotions of his household, the old man was heard to utter a gentle sigh, and sank quietly to the ground. He had quitted earth for heaven, and a happy death had terminated his peaceful life.

His son lived yet many years. His death did not take place until the 25th of October 1714, when he rejoined his father in eternity, leaving behind him the renown of a talented artist, and the still more desirable fame of a man of true worth and excellence.

Sebastian Leclerc left behind him a considerable number of engravings; amongst others, a collection of the divers costumes of the reign of Louis XIV., the battles of Alexander,* the Council of Nice, &c.; and he was also the author of several works on Geometry, Architecture, &c., which are still held in estimation.

* In the first impression of the print representing Alexander's Entry into Babylon, the head of the hero is delineated in profile. When Leclerc presented this print to Louis XIV., the monarch having observed: 'I should have thought Alexander might have honoured *me* with a *look*,' the artist, on the ensuing day, brought to the king a new impression of the print, in which the conqueror's head was so placed as to look his majesty full in the face.

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GOOD COUNSEL BETTER THAN GOOD PAY:

A LEGEND OF BRITTANY.

Near the village of Elven, on the road leading from Varennes to Ploërmel, in the department of the Morbihan, there lived, more than sixty years ago, an honest peasant named Trédion, whose amiable and industrious wife, Jeanne Marie, had made him the happy father of a fine boy and a pretty little girl. Employment having become scarce in that part of the country, and Trédion having heard it said that high wages were given in the neighbourhood of Fougères, he took leave of his wife, embraced his children, and set off for that place, where he was very soon hired by a rich farmer of the name of Laignelet. The latter was an honest man, who cultivated his land with care; and besides a large flock of sheep, was also the owner of a great number of cows and pigs. His wife was an active, thrifty

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housekeeper, and God had blessed them with a numerous family.

Trédion had the good fortune to please the farmer, his wife, the children, and indeed every one; so that at the termination of a few weeks Laignelet said to him: 'Trédion, I like the way you do my business. You are a good labourer, and I should wish to keep you with me for some time. Will you hire to me for two years? I promise you sixty crowns at the expiration of that term, and a present of a new coat in addition to the bargain—your board and lodging free—and every Sunday you shall have your pint of good cider: in short, you shall be treated like one of the family.'

Trédion assented to this proposal; and during the two years he neglected nothing which could forward his master's interests. At one moment he was to be seen superintending the labourers digging potatoes, which are so well cultivated in Brittany; at another time working himself, ploughing, harrowing, tending the sheep and cows, or driving the pigs to fairs and markets. For ten leagues round there was not a farm-servant to be compared to him. Trédion was not only diligent at his work, but it seemed as if good-luck attended all his undertakings. Consequently, these two years appeared very short to all parties. Laignelet feeling that to lose Trédion would be to lose his right arm, resolved to keep him at any cost; therefore, when the day arrived for settling his accounts, Laignelet thus addressed him: 'My friend, I value your services too much to part with you, if you will only remain with me. Re-engage for three years more, and I will double your wages, and give you another new coat. Thus, at the end of that time, you will find yourself the possessor of a large sum, and can return to your

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wife, have cows and pigs of your own, and live comfortably and respectably with your family, instead of being obliged to work for others.'

The offer was tempting. The poor fellow consented, consoling himself with the idea that Jeanne Marie would not have disapproved had she been there, and that, in the meantime, she could get on very well with the help of God and of their son, who was ten years old when his father left home for Fougères.

Things went on even better during these three years than during the first two. The harvest was abundant, the wool sold well, the farm prospered in every respect, and gaiety presided at the evening fireside. Trédion, though somewhat superstitious, like all the natives of his province, was an amusing fellow, who bore good-humouredly the laugh which his ingenious simplicity created; and the children liked him because he told them stories in the long winter evenings. No province in France has more legends than Brittany.

Every one at the farm grew melancholy as the termination of Trédion's engagement approached; and, to say the truth, he felt himself somewhat heavy at heart, though he knew his duty recalled him to Jeanne Marie and his children. Laignelet and his wife, therefore, consulted together, and a few days before the engagement expired—a moment to which all looked forward with such sorrow—the farmer made an offer to Trédion of eighty crowns if he would remain with him but one year longer.

'Remember, my dear friend,' added he, 'that with these six years' wages you will be enabled to bring back to your wife a very large sum; and that with this money not only can you buy cows and pigs, but can also purchase a small

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house with an acre of land, where you and your family can live in happiness and independence.'

Trédion certainly felt some pangs of conscience, but how was it possible to resist the temptation of securing such a future to himself and those most dear to him? Perhaps at that very moment his children were begging for a few potatoes at the door of some charitable person; but how they would be compensated for all their privations on his returning to them with so much money and two new coats! He engaged, therefore, for a sixth year in Laignelet's service.

This time the months seemed to pass with greater swiftness than before, and everything prospered at the farm beyond even the hopes of its proprietor, who in consequence built a new barn, purchased some additional acres of ground, increased his flock, and what was better than all, attributed the greater part of his good fortune to his faithful servant. Laignelet now determined to make one more effort to keep Trédion for another year. For this purpose he took him aside, repeated all his former arguments, not omitting the new coat and the pint of cider on Sunday, and finally assured him that to the money already due he would add three hundred crowns more at the end of the seventh year, which would then enable him to return home with a fortune!

Never was peasant more tempted than Trédion: however, this time nature triumphed. The desire of seeing his family was stronger than his love of money, and he had the courage to declare that he would prefer returning to Elven. Laignelet could not blame him; and this time he did not try to keep him against his wish, so strongly expressed.

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It was easy to see, on the morning of Trédion's departure, that no one had closed an eye the previous night. He remarked that his mistress, the active housekeeper, had not been in bed, but had passed the night in making and in baking bread. They breakfasted in silence, and all were preparing in sadness to wish him good-bye, when his master took him into his room and thus spoke to him: 'You have been my servant for six years, and no one ever before served me so faithfully. During all that time, I have not missed one farthing in my accounts, and the cider has never once affected your head. Whatever I have paid you from time to time in advance of your wages, you may now keep; it is not too much, when I consider all you have spent on playthings for the children. Ah! how the little ones will miss their good friend Trédion: I hear them sobbing in the next room!' And whilst he thus spoke, honest Laignelet turned aside and wiped away a tear; but he instantly resumed: 'Trédion, my good friend, you ought by this time to know me well. I read in your countenance that we understand each other: is it not so? I thank you, then, for your faithful services, and for your friendship.' Here the tears rolled down Trédion's cheeks, for he could no longer control his feelings. 'Come, come,' said Laignelet, 'dry up your tears, and let us speak of business. Have you confidence in me?'

'Confidence in you, master!' exclaimed Trédion. 'Oh, most certainly!'

'Will you, then, listen to the good advice I am about to give you before starting?' added Laignelet.

'Most willingly, master; and I promise you to follow it strictly.'

'What would you say if I begged of you to accept my

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good counsels in lieu of the money I owe you; and if I persuaded you that, on arriving at home, you will admit that you had been a gainer by the bargain, will you not be satisfied? Now let me know if you really have confidence in me: do you accept my advice in place of your money?'

This question upset all Trédion's calculations. He had often heard such and such a farmer praised for the good advice he gave his servants; he knew it was customary to pay large sums to lawyers, whether their counsels were good or bad; he had also been told that neither the kings nor queens of France could decide on anything serious without consulting advisers, whom they paid highly. He considered Laignelet on a par with any of these counsellors, and had unlimited confidence in him; yet he did not esteem him so much as to prefer his advice to good coin of the realm; therefore, after a few moments' reflection, he replied: 'To say the truth, master, I am quite taken by surprise.' Then, making an effort to laugh, he added in a rather awkward manner: 'Ah! I see how it is; you are joking, master. But no matter—it is better to laugh than to cry: still I should prefer my money, unless'——

Trédion could not conceal his anxiety to unravel this mystery, especially when he saw that Laignelet did not join in the laugh, but still tried to persuade him in the most serious tone.

'You are now leaving me,' said he, 'after having served me for six years, and have every right to the money you have so well earned. Do you think I could look you straight in the face if I intended to deprive you of one single shilling?'

'But, sir,' replied Trédion, 'how am *I* to look my wife

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and children straight in the face when they ask me for the money I promised to bring back from Fougères?'

'I know what is passing in your mind,' answered Laignelet; 'but I again assure you that if you accept my advice, you will soon be as happy with your family as I am with mine; nay, more, you will arrive at Elven richer than you now are. But if, on the contrary, you unfortunately decide to put the money I owe you (and which I am ready to hand to you this moment) into your pocket, the charm will be broken, my advice will be of no avail, and you will reach home as poor as when you left it. Take, therefore, the advice I am willing to give you in place of your money, otherwise you will repent it as long as you live.'

Trédion still hesitated, twisted and turned in all directions, and looked up to heaven, as though he expected some good genius would fly down to free him from his embarrassment; but Laignelet, who was resolved to make him accept the bargain, anticipated all objections by saying: 'I know your thoughts, and it is not kind of you to doubt your old master's word; but I so sincerely wish your welfare, that I am determined to persuade you to follow my advice. I once more repeat, that it will be a great misfortune if you decide to accept your money, and refuse my advice. But if, on the contrary, you place entire confidence in me, and if, on arriving at home, you are not delighted with your bargain, you have only to come back and serve me for another year, and I will add a hundred crowns to the sum I already owe you.'

Trédion could no longer hold out against this tempting promise, and the perfect confidence he felt in his master finally decided him; while, half in hope and half in fear, he declared his willingness to accept—*advice in place of money.*

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As soon as Trédion had consented to the bargain, the farmer begged of him to sit down, and to pay the greatest attention to what he was about to say. 'Listen to me most attentively,' added he; 'for unless you adhere strictly to my advice, I much fear you will pay dearly for your negligence; whilst, on the other hand, if you follow it to the letter, you will soon be one of the happiest of men.'

'I am all attention, sir,' replied Trédion.

'*Advice the first*,' began Laignelet: 'in returning home, never leave the high-road; avoid all by-ways; and though the distance may be shorter, never go through a wood. Do you understand me?'

'Yes, sir,' answered Trédion. But he could not help muttering to himself: 'If the second piece of advice be no better than this, my money is well invested!'

'*Advice the second*,' continued Laignelet: 'if you stop in a strange house, especially at night, look around you well; and if you find that the master of the house is old, and the mistress young, leave it as fast as possible, and on no account sleep there. Will you recollect this advice especially?'

'Sir, I know it by heart,' replied Trédion; again muttering to himself: 'If I could find any one to accept of my bargain at the same price, I would give it up to him this moment.'

But there was no retreat; he felt that he had nothing for it but to make the best of his bargain. He now thanked his master, and was about to go without asking another question, when the good woman of the house came into the room with the children, and M. Laignelet, taking Trédion by the hand, said: 'What do you mean by running off in this way, my good fellow? To set out without any provisions

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for your journey! Water is everywhere to be found instead of cider, but bread is not to be had so easily. My wife staid up last night to bake, and has provided for all your wants. Take this large loaf under your arm, and eat it on the road; but put the small one in your pocket as a present from us to your good wife, Jeanne Marie. When she tastes it, she will tell you there is no bread made like it in all Brittany. I will put it myself into your pocket. What! no button? Here, wife!—a needle and thread: sew up that pocket, or Trédion will lose his loaf.'

When the pocket was strongly stitched, every one embraced Trédion, and he bade them all a sorrowful farewell. The poor fellow was so affected by the grief of the children that he almost forgot the bargain he had made.

We shall not relate the various thoughts which troubled poor Trédion the first day of his journey: one moment accusing himself of idiocy, the next doubting his master's good faith, and then again trying to discover some cabalistic meaning in advice which had cost him four hundred crowns. The first evening he stopped at the cabin of a shepherd, who cheerfully shared his supper with him. The following morning he continued his journey, and in a little while fell in with two pedlers, who carried their wares on their back, and were on their way to the fair of Montfort. They travelled on together for some distance, and the mirth and gaiety of his companions put all Trédion's melancholy reflections to flight; but when they began to praise their goods, and begged him to examine them, his hand involuntarily sought his pocket, and his grief redoubled on finding it so empty. Still he was rich enough to spend fifteenpence on the purchase of a pair of scissors for his wife!

They soon afterwards arrived at a turn of the road leading

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from Montauban to Hedes, and one of the pedlers interrupted the conversation by saying: 'This must be the finger-post they spoke to us of at the hotel last night, and this is the path which will save us two good leagues to Montfort.'

'It is the very one,' replied the second pedler. 'Come, let us go this way, as it is the shortest.'

Trédion, as precious of his time, and as anxious to spare the soles of his shoes as his companions, was just about to follow them, when his master's advice recurred to him, and he stopped short that instant, repeating to himself: '*When you are returning home, always keep on the high-road; avoid by-ways; and, above all, never go through a wood, though the distance may be shorter.*' He had paid too dearly for this advice not to follow it implicitly; so he bade the pedlers good-bye, and walked on straight before him.

Nothing remarkable occurred until he arrived at Montfort, where, to his surprise, he found the two pedlers sitting at the door of a hotel, their clothes torn, their faces bruised, and telling every one of the way they had been used. They were still so agitated, that they could with difficulty answer Trédion's anxious inquiries; but when they did speak, they told him that the pathway they had chosen led them into the middle of a wood, where six men, armed with sticks, and their faces blackened, lay in wait for them; and not content with robbing them of their goods and all their money, had cruelly beaten them into the bargain. They fancied they recognised amongst these robbers the voice of the man who the day before had recommended them to take this short cut. Trédion consoled them as best he could, whilst he secretly congratulated himself on having so opportunely remembered the advice of his master; for though little richer than the pedlers now were, he at least had

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escaped being beaten. Unable to render them any further assistance, he took leave of the pedlers a second time, and pursued his journey. He stopped but once, and that at a spring of clear water, when he sat down on the grass, ate a portion of his large loaf, drank from the well, thanked God for having preserved him from the first dangers of his journey, and then, feeling much refreshed, walked on until evening.

The sun was setting when he reached the boundaries of the department of the Ille-et-Vilaine. He hoped to go on to Plelan, where he had an acquaintance, a shepherd, who would have welcomed him to his cottage; but it was even then dark, his limbs were failing him, and he saw with no small pleasure a light twinkling through the windows of a large farm-house. Here he determined to ask lodging for the night: he knocked at the door, and entering with the customary salutation of Brittany: 'God bless you!' was well received by a young woman, who asked him to walk into the kitchen; for the frank hospitality of ancient times still lingers in Brittany. Trédion therefore seated himself without much ceremony in the chimney-corner beside a good blazing fire, lighted his pipe, joined in the conversation of two or three travellers, who, like himself, had sought shelter beneath this hospitable roof, and partook of a supper of fine potatoes and vegetables served up soon after.

Everything in the house bore evidence of plenty and comfort. Large flitches of bacon hung in the chimney; on a large dresser of walnut-wood shone a service of bright pewter, mixed with a few china-plates and some drinking-glasses, which latter are looked upon by the farmers of Brittany as a sign of wealth and luxury. The lowing of the cows and the grunting of another species of quadruped no

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less familiar to Trédion's ear, reminded him of the farm where he had worked with so much diligence for six successive years. He looked round for the host and hostess of the house—he saw only the young woman who had received him on entering: she was very handsome, and very coquettishly dressed, but, apparently uneasy in her mind, was continually walking to and fro, and every moment stopping to look at the clock, as if she wished to make the hands move faster. Near him sat two travellers, honest-looking fellows, who, from their conversation, he soon discovered to be farmers on their way to the fair at Montfort, and who had but just arrived a few minutes before himself. They knew the owner of the house only by name; he was then absent, but was expected home every moment. A gray-headed old man soon entered, and bowing good-naturedly to every one, expressed a hope that they were all comfortable. His venerable and respectable appearance was most striking; and when the young woman advanced towards him in a most coaxing manner, Trédion at once thought 'that must be her father!' but on a question to the servant-girl, she whispered him: 'He is her husband!' The young wife and the old husband retired together arm-in-arm. Laignelet's second piece of advice respecting an old husband and young wife now flashed across Trédion's mind. Starting up from his seat, and taking advantage of a moment when the attention of the others was engaged, he glided softly towards the door, and without wishing any one good-night, left the house.

The night had grown stormy. Trédion roved for some time round and round the farm, and at length entered a shed filled with sheaves of corn. Despairing to reach the high-road before morning, and anxious for a little rest, he

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laid himself down in a corner of the shed, and closed his eyes; but he could not fall asleep so quickly as was his wont, his mind being too much disturbed by the occurrences of the three preceding days, and more especially by his own escape from the misfortunes of the pedlers. Laignelet's second piece of advice occupied his thoughts still more, though he could not as yet understand what danger he should have incurred by remaining near the good fire in the kitchen. Silence soon reigned all around, and everything betokened how little annoyance the rain caused the guests who had found shelter beneath the hospitable farm-house. The lights which shone through the windows disappeared one after another, and every one seemed to have gone to rest.

'Who knows,' said Trédion to himself, 'but that my foolish terror may have deprived me of a comfortable bed, which doubtless would have been offered to me after supper?'

At that moment he heard a noise—the trampling of a horse: he listened, and suddenly it stopped under the shed. Peeping out stealthily, Trédion saw a young man dismount, fasten the bridle to a post, throw his dark cloak across the saddle, and putting his hand in his belt, draw forth a pistol, which he the next instant proceeded to load. Terrified at this sight, poor Trédion buried himself under the sheaves of wheat, not daring to look out again. Fortunately the horse was standing between him and this mysterious personage. The latter, believing himself alone, advanced a few steps in front of the shed. Trédion, now breathing more freely, ventured once more to raise his head: he had scarcely done so, when a gentle knock at one of the windows was immediately answered by the appearance of the figure of a woman

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from within, holding a light, thus proving that the robber —if he was one—had an inmate of the house as an accomplice. Trédion trembled but the more at this discovery: still, summoning up all his courage, he crawled along close under the house, and lost not one word of the following dialogue:

'It is I, Madeleine,' said the man. 'I am come, according to promise, to rid you of your husband, and to find you another—one not forced on you by relatives. Have you taken care that suspicion of the crime shall rest on some one else?'

'Chance has served us better than my prudence,' answered she. 'Some strangers arrived to-night, and have remained to sleep. We can easily accuse them, and have them convicted.'

'May I then go in and follow you?'

'Come, and leave the rest to me.'

Here they both ceased speaking; and the man having climbed in by the window, it was instantly shut after him.

As may be imagined, Trédion's palpitations increased not a little. However, he had not so much courage as honesty, or he would have roused the house by a cry of 'Murder.' His conscience reproached him with cowardice, still cowardice prevailed. He fancied the slightest noise would draw down on himself the vengeance of the assassin, whose figure he magnified into that of a giant.

'I shall be one victim the more,' thought he; 'but at least I will provide myself with undeniable proofs against the author of this crime, which I cannot prevent.'

Trédion took the scissors he had bought from the pedlers as a gift for his wife, and cut out a small piece of cloth

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from beneath the collar of the cloak which had been left on the saddle, and then with the point of the scissors pierced three holes in the bridle, but so small, that it was not likely they would be noticed. Having taken these precautions, he was creeping away from the shed, when he heard a heavy groan, which went to his very heart; but once on the high-road, he quickened his pace, and was soon out of sight and hearing.

That same morning, before sunrise, Trédion crossed the boundaries of the department of the Ille-et-Vilaine, not more than ten leagues from his native village. From that moment he felt renewed strength animate him, and at six o'clock that evening he beheld the smoke rising from his humble home. Oh, what happiness! Jeanne Marie was standing at the door looking along the road; and instantly recognising him, she flew with the children to meet him, and all embraced with the tenderest affection.

After a while, Trédion thought it proper to explain matters; but when he announced that he returned with his pockets almost empty, the family were thunder-struck, and Jeanne Marie had the cruelty to receive the present of the scissors without one word of thanks. The good woman could scarcely believe that Trédion was telling the truth, and begged him to relate all his adventures in detail. He did not require to be asked twice; and commencing from the first day he left them, ended by repeating word for word the advice given by the farmer of Fougères in lieu of his money.

'So this is all you bring back to us for your six years of labour and absence?' said Jeanne Marie, interrupting her husband. 'Is it possible you have returned empty-handed?'

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This reproach reminded Trédion of the second loaf of bread.

'It's quite true,' said he; 'but I forgot that Madame Laignelet sent you a loaf of bread made with her own hands.'

His pocket was soon opened.

'Let us see,' said Jeanne Marie, 'if the women of Fougères bake better bread than those of Elven.'

Trédion's children leaped with joy at the sight of the white bread, so superior to the coarse oaten cakes they were in the habit of eating; but nothing could equal their surprise when, on cutting the loaf, the knife brought to light a purse containing fifty guineas, and a letter, the contents of which were spelled over by Trédion's son, and were as follows:

'My dear Trédion—I trust this letter may reach its destination in safety, as it is intended for the messenger who carried it. Credulous and obliging as we know you to be, you would have run the risk of arriving at home as poor as you left it, if I did not force you to accept the advice given for nothing, although it really was worth the fifty guineas you were supposed to have paid me. It is not sufficient to have money, my dear Trédion; we must also know how to employ it. Make good use, therefore, of what you now possess; and that God may bless you, is the wish of your old master, Laignelet.'

On finishing the perusal of this letter, Trédion and his wife fell on their knees to pray God to return a hundredfold the blessings with which it concluded. Jeanne Marie's curiosity having only been suspended by this incident, her husband was obliged to continue his story for her

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satisfaction, relating, not without a shudder, the history of the pedlers who had been robbed and beaten, and the mysteries of the past night, in which Trédion had so narrowly escaped being charged with such a horrible crime. How precious did Laignelet's advice now seem to Trédion's poor wife!

Prudence sometimes accompanies riches. Trédion and Jeanne Marie, after again and again consulting over their gold, decided it was better to keep silent as to his adventures and his happy return, in order not to tempt the cupidity of their neighbours. It was only at the expiration of a few months that they employed the money, as Laignelet had advised, in the purchase of two fine cows, six pigs, and a pretty little cottage, with some land adjoining. Trédion felt very anxious to know what had occurred at the farm-house from which he had so narrowly escaped, and especially what had become of the two travellers he left there. The clergyman of the village alone appeared a safe confidant, and to him, after some time, he went, and gave an exact account of all he had seen and heard on his journey homewards.

'Wretched man!' cried the priest; 'through your fault, two innocent men may be condemned to death. The trial is to come on to-morrow.'

'God forefend!' exclaimed Trédion in terror. 'What am I to do, sir?'

'Have you kept the piece of cloth?' asked the clergyman.

'Here it is, fastened by a pin to the lining of my coat,' replied Trédion.

The clergyman then wrote a note, and giving it to Trédion, said: 'You must set out at once for Rennes in my carriage, and not stop on any account until you reach

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the gate of the court-house. Then send in this note to the judge, with whom I am acquainted; he will have you instantly summoned, and confront you with the jury, the prisoners, and the real culprits. Go now, and remember that you are the bearer of a decree which may save from death two innocent men.'

The next day, about two in the afternoon, the clergyman's carriage drew up before the court-house at Rennes, and in a few minutes afterwards Trédion was standing in the presence of the judge.

In truth that very day two men were to be tried for having entered the house of a rich farmer, and having murdered and robbed him while asleep. The accusation had been borne out by the young wife of the victim, who had made her declaration with the greatest confidence. According to her statement, the two murderers had fastened her to the bed-post, gagged her mouth, and bound her eyes; in which state she had been found next morning by the servants of the house, who instantly gave the alarm in the neighbourhood. The two prisoners, on whose persons had been found a purse filled with gold belonging to the murdered man, affected utter ignorance of the whole affair; but proofs were clear against them, and the defence made by their lawyer, eloquent though it was, only tended to confirm the court in the conviction of their guilt. After an hour's deliberation, the jury had that moment returned to pronounce its verdict, when the judge (to whom a note had just been handed) with some agitation addressed them, and said: 'Gentlemen of the jury, an extraordinary circumstance has occurred: a new witness has, without any summons, this moment arrived, and he declares his readiness to make a deposition in favour of the accused. I should deem

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myself unworthy of the post I occupy did I not request you to suspend your decision, which might one day prove both to you and to me a source of remorse.'

The judge then sent for Trédion, to whom the usual oath was administered, and he was desired to ascend the table. Every one present remarked the effect produced on the young widow by the entrance of this witness. She was seated near a tall young man, with whom she had frequently held counsel during the course of the trial. She now looked at Trédion, whom she at once recognised, in evident agitation; whilst he, encouraged by the prisoners' lawyer, spoke out boldly and clearly.

'My lord,' said he, 'before giving my testimony, I must request you will order the doors to be closed; for I am very much mistaken if the real culprits be not here present.'

At these words the young woman covered her face with her handkerchief, and the young man buttoned up his cloak. Trédion then began his narrative, and the murmurs of approbation from the audience proved that his testimony was believed: acquiring confidence, and becoming almost eloquent as he went on, he turned round towards the guilty woman, and pointing to her, said: 'There is she who came to the window to speak to the stranger: I should recognise her even better if she would say a few words in a low tone to the man who is sitting near her; for that man is the assassin himself: I know him by his figure, by his cloak, of which I kept a small pattern—here it is! Examine if this little bit of cloth be not wanting under the collar!'

This singular accusation, and this proof, of which they had not until now the remotest suspicion, filled the culprits with terror. While the jury were examining the cloak,

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Trédion added: 'Let this man also produce the bridle of his horse, and in it you will find three little holes made by me with the point of a pair of scissors.'

Trédion had proved enough: the assassin did not try to deny it; his accomplice fainted; and the farmers raised their hands to heaven, to thank God for their miraculous escape from an ignominious death.

The court broke up; and new proceedings were instituted against the true culprits, who were put into prison to await their trial: it took place three months later, when they were both condemned, and executed in the market-place.

Trédion for the moment was the 'lion' of Rennes. But he soon set off for home, paying a visit on his way to the farmers whose lives he had saved. He and his wife ever after lived in happiness and comfort, and brought up their children in the love and fear of God, often repeating to them that 'Good Counsel is better than Good Pay.'

THE END.

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